A STUDY OF THE BIBLICAL NOVEL IN AMERICA, 1940-1949
WITH A SURVEY OF THE BIBLICAL NOVEL IN GENERAL IN
THE NINETEENTH AND TWENTIETH CENTURIES

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CHAPTER ONE

THE PLACE OF THE BIBLICAL NOVEL IN PROSE FICTION

Men who chronicle the publication of books in the United States have long been aware of the popularity of those of religious significance. When the keeping of best seller records started in 1895, Sienkiewicz's Quo Vadis headed the list; Charles Sheldon's In His Steps, first published in 1897, has had the biggest sale in the field of fiction with its estimated 20,000,000 copies. An ordinary novel may be fortunate to realize a hundred thousand copies; a religious novel may hope to sell into the millions. One field of religious fiction, the biblical novel, has never been explored beyond casual articles and the compilation of partial bibliographies. Its wide popularity and increasingly large yield invite a more extensive investigation.

In such a study it will be necessary first to define the term "biblical novel." In this discussion it will not refer to that large body of fiction whose contents are religious and biblical in a general way. For instance, Charles Sheldon's In His Steps is permeated

with the spirit of Christian teaching, but, because the characters are distinctly of our day, it will not be classed as biblical. Ian Maclaren's delightful little volume about the staunch Presbyterian Scotchmen, called Beside the Bonnie Briar Bush, became a Christian classic, but for our purposes the modern setting excludes it from the task at hand. Certainly Nathaniel Hawthorne's Scarlet Letter is an American version of Nathan's "Thou art the man"; yet it is a novel of New England and Puritanism. Hall Cain's The Christian, Ralph Connor's Sky Pilot, and Harold Bell Wright's The Shepherd of the Hills were counted among the best sellers of their day and were deeply religious in content, but not biblical in the sense in which we shall use the term. Within recent years many other books of this nature have become popular favorites, such as Lloyd Cassel Douglas' Magnificent Obsession, Forgive Us Our Trespasses, Green Light, and White Banners; A. J. Cronin's The Keys of the Kingdom; and Franz Werfel's The Song of Bernadette. Countless others could be mentioned among novels that have made spiritual impact upon their readers--often a frankly Christian one. There have been writers like George Eliot who claimed no particular creed but whose novels, nevertheless, carry a deep, though unlabeled, ethical and religious

message. Often readers prefer in their fiction a coming to grips with life without benefit of labels or creeds. It is not the purpose of the present study to consider the superiority of one kind over the other. Although the term "biblical novel" will occasionally be used loosely to cover all biblical fiction, we are concerned chiefly with the examination of a particular type within the field: that fictitious, plotted prose narrative of considerable length which deals with actual biblical characters and setting and retells in some fashion the scriptural narrative.

Biblical novels so defined are therefore a branch of the more general division of historical fiction, which, in turn, portrays human experiences in much the same way as any other type of fiction so long as the facts remain compatible with the historical setting. The historical novelist goes a step beyond the historian as he offers the reader the hospitality of an open door into the homes of the past and the hearts and minds of the people. The novelist is under no compulsion to literal and factual truth in interpreting his chosen epoch. He may alter characters, events, or chronology to achieve his desired effect. In such variation, however, Hervey Allen reminds us that it

is an artistic and not a moral peril that is braved, since the literary label of "novel" has already given notice of the fictional nature of the writing.[1] It is well to remember this legitimate freedom of the novelist who deals with biblical materials, with which many readers are already familiar and about which they may have definite convictions.

It should not be surprising that half of the best selling novels of today are of the historical variety. Cavemen of old probably told stories of their past as they sat about the evening fire; minstrels sang of heroes in the mead halls. We, like our forebears, continue to re-create bygone days. Sometimes such fiction becomes an escape from unpleasant reality as it follows the course of romance and adventure. It may be primarily a sightseeing excursion into the past. It can be the means of facing the problems of today in a historical setting. In the most successful historical fiction, as in the biblical novel, the reader discovers a past wherein real people lived, with an emphasis on the unchanging nature of humanity through the centuries.

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[1] "History and the Novel," Atlantic, CLXXIII (February, 1944), 120.

Two modern developments have prompted interest in the biblical fiction of our day: archeological discoveries and cinema versions of scriptural stories. Many Moses narratives have been based upon archeological findings in Egypt, and in the last decade Abraham stories are becoming increasingly numerous as a result of the scientific research in Ur and Sodom. "From the Land of the Bible," an exhibit held in the summer of 1953 at the Metropolitan Museum, featured scrolls, pottery, slingstones, coins, and various other artifacts from biblical times. It is no longer unusual for farmers in modern Israel to turn up archeological treasures as they till their fields. Both old and New Testament fiction have been generally enriched by such finds as the "Dead Sea Scrolls" of 1947 and the constant valuable additions from caves in Palestine.

A second stimulus to biblical fiction has resulted from cinema productions such as Quo Vadis and The Robe. Quo Vadis has been described as a "technicolored colossus" with seven million dollars worth of horses, lions, costumes, and scenery. This and the elaborate cinemascope version of The Robe present with their pageant of terror and destruction the lure of the original circus of Nero. Beyond this, however, they catch notes of Christian faith and devotion. Old Testament heroes have been popularly

acclaimed in the films of "David and Bathsheba" and "Samson and Delilah." In considerably less degree is the religious element paramount in Rita Hayworth's interpretation of the title role in "Salome." Wherever the producer chooses to place his emphasis, the popularity of biblical films tends to enhance the sale of biblical novels, which also vary in their manner of appeal.

In any serious study of biblical fiction it is first necessary to assemble a bibliography comprising, as far as possible, all contributions in the field. Such a list has been arranged for the reader's convenience at the close of the discussion (1) alphabetically by authors, (2) chronologically by date of publication (with annotations as to content), and (3) according to subject matter.

Chapter II comprises a historical survey of the development of the biblical novel as a literary genre from the beginning of the nineteenth century to the close of 1954, the date of the completion of this study. In general the discussion has been by decades, with separate consideration for British, American, and foreign authors. Chronological order is observed except when one writer has made more than one offering in biblical fiction; in that case, his entire contribution is discussed upon the introduction of his name.

A more detailed study is attempted in Chapter III in relation to the biblical novels of the forties by American authors. A careful analysis of such fiction in the last completed decade should offer an insight into the entire subject. All the books deal in some manner with familiar biblical materials. The fundamental query, however, does not concern the extent or manner of the author's variation from his source so much as his reason for it. Why does an author elect to retell a story already well known to his reader? What is his purpose? Through the medium of the familiar narrative, what is he trying to say and how well does he succeed? How much of an artist is he in the process?

In the concluding chapter an effort is made to explain the various steps in the development of the biblical novel and to relate it to the contemporary social and political background.

CHAPTER TWO

A HISTORICAL SURVEY OF THE BIBLICAL NOVEL

PART I. THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Approximately three-fourths of the entire output of biblical fiction has been produced within the last fifty years, although the earlier books date back almost to the opening of the nineteenth century. It is difficult to deal definitely with some of the older novels, because they are almost inaccessible to readers today. A number of them are not even listed in the Library of Congress, and verification of their nature has had to be made through booksellers' catalogues of former years. One can never be sure of an exact count of these books, for there is always the possibility that some may have been overlooked. The more important ones, however, are extant; the more prolific writers, whether worthy or not, have attracted enough attention to provoke reviews in the periodicals of their day.

Until the middle of the nineteenth century there were very few biblical novels by either American or European authors. Robert Watt in his four-volume Bibliotheca

Britannica (1824) mentions two of the earliest ones, which were published in London: The Abyssinian Reformer, or The Bible and Sabre (1808) by Rev. Charles Lucas and Patriarchal Times, or The Land of Canaan: A Figurative History: Seven Books Comprising Interesting Events, Incidents, and Characters, Founded on the Holy Scriptures (1811) by Adelaide O'Keefe. Besides the information furnished in the sub-titles and the fact that the first is a three-volume book and the second two-volumes, no other description of the contents seems to be available. The next novel on record is a story of Maccabean days, translated from the German: Helon's Pilgrimage to Jerusalem: A Picture of Jadaism in the Century That Preceded the Advent of Our Saviour (1824) by Gerhard Friedrich Strauss. Then followed two narratives based upon the legend of the Wandering Jew: Salathiel, A Story of The Past, The Present, and The Future (1828)[1] by Rev. George Croly of London and Ahasverus (1834) by Edgar Quinet, French historian and philosopher. The translations of the books of Strauss and Quinet established an early precedent for the publication in English of

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[1]Salathiel was later republished by Funk and Wagnalls under the title Tarry Thou Till I Come.

biblical novels from other lands. It was not until 1841 that William Ware, a Unitarian clergyman of New York City, wrote Julian, the first American biblical novel. A popular novelist of his time, Ware portrayed in Julian the human side of Jesus, especially within the Nazareth home.

In the second half of the nineteenth century the development of biblical fiction may be easily traced on both sides of the Atlantic, with the number of books increasing in each succeeding decade. One of the most important biblical novelists of the entire period, Joseph Holt Ingraham, appears in the opening decade. Already the author of eighty short novels, this American writer turned his attention to biblical fiction after entering the Episcopal ministry. His first effort in the field was The Prince of the House of David (1855), a phenomenal popular success with a sale of between four and five million copies in its numerous editions. Ingraham bases his plot upon the last three years of Jesus' life, which are related by a Jewish girl in letters to her father in Egypt. Also in the epistolary style are the author's two other biblical narratives: The Pillar of Fire (1859), a fictional extension of the Exodus, and The Throne of David (1860), an

account of David's reign told by an Assyrian ambassador in letters to the King of Nineveh. A fourth narrative, featuring the life of Paul, was in progress at the time of Ingraham's death. In spite of the somewhat monotonous use of letters, these novels give evidence of careful background study and definite narrative appeal. They helped to popularize fiction in America and to liberalize the general attitude toward religion.

The decades of the sixties and seventies were unaccompanied by any biblical novels of great stature, although five of the authors made for themselves a reputation still remembered in literary circles. A follower of Scott's methods in the historical novel, Georg M. Ebers, eminent German Egyptologist who wrote historical romances of ancient Egypt, enlarged his field in 1867 to include a two-volume biblical novel entitled Joshua: A Tale of Biblical Times. A popular English historical novelist of the same period, George James Whyte-Melville, also published one biblical narrative among his historical romances. His Sarchedon: A Tale of the Great Queen (1871) is a tale of Egypt and Assyria in the eighth century before Christ, with events in Egypt at the period before the Exodus introduced by a bold anachronism. Six years after this book was published Gustave Flaubert wrote Herodias, a fictional

extension of the marriage of Herod Antipas and his brother's wife, the same plot used by Lloyd Douglas in his recent best seller, The Big Fisherman. The fourth popular novelist of the seventies to write biblical fiction was Susan Bogert Warner, who used the pseudonym of Elizabeth Wetherell. Already the author of a long series of novels and children's stories in a day when sentiment and piety were more popular in literature than now, she fictionized the Old Testament story of the return of the Jews to Palestine in her Broken Walls of Jerusalem and the Rebuilding of Them (1879). The fifth author of this group to achieve distinction other than by publication of a biblical novel was Rev. Edwin A. Abbott, headmaster of the City of London School and later a minister of note. Besides writing school books on grammar, he found time to publish two biblical novels: Philochristus (1878), the first of a long line of "additional gospel" narratives in which a disciple of Jesus records his memoirs, and Onesimus, Christ's Freedman (1882), written as the memoirs of a disciple of Paul. Both books were widely read and appreciated for their scholarly background and literary skill, as well as for narrative appeal.

The second best-selling biblical novel of the nineteenth century came from the pen of Lew Wallace. In his distinguished career as soldier, lawyer, and statesman, Wallace found time to write three historical novels, one of which was Ben-Hur; or The Days of the Messiah (1880), a book which has become an institution in American fiction. This panoramic romance of life in the first century sold a million copies and was translated into foreign languages and into braille, with pirated copies springing up on every hand. The theatre, recognizing the drama within the pages of the book, presented the story six thousand times; the movies featured it in a colossal version; the chariot race, which became the main event of Barnum and Bailey's Circus, has appeared in altered form as recently as 1942 in Manuel Komroff's In the Years of Our Lord. Within a few years after the publication of Wallace's novel, a whole "Ben-Hur School" developed, producing such books as Barabbas (1893) by Marie Corelli, Titus (1896) by Florence Kingsley, Paul of Tarsus (1900) by Robert Bird, Adnah (1902) by J. B. Ellis, Saul of Tarsus (1906) by Elizabeth Miller, and The Court of Pilate (1906) by Roe R. Hobbs.

Among other biblical novels of the eighties are three from authors who have received varying degrees of

literary recognition and four by translation from foreign languages. Francis Marion Crawford, who published his biblical novel two years after Ben Hur, is classed as an American, although he was born in Italy and educated in Europe. Two of his forty novels, which were equally popular in England and America, received the commendation of the French Academy; one of these was his biblical narrative, Zoroaster (1885), a stirring tale of Darius the Persian and the prophet Daniel. Three years later a popular English novelist and foreign correspondent, George Alfred Henty, wrote The Cat of Bubastes: A Tale of Egypt in the Time of Thothmes III (1888). At the height of his popularity, Henty turned out an average of three or four novels a year; then he turned to writing adventure stories for boys, and among eighty such narratives is numbered his biblical novel dealing with Moses and the Exodus. The third novelist of the eighties to be remembered was an English clergyman and author of juvenile literature, Rev. Alfred John Church. His first story, The Hammer (1889), concerns the struggle of the Maccabees and was later republished as Patriot and Hero. His other books were based on the New Testament: The Burning of Rome: A Story of Nero's Days (1892) and The Crown of Pine (1905), an account of Jewish opposition to Christianity, especially to the

preaching of Paul.

Translations from foreign authors during the eighties include The Romance of a Mummy (1882) by French Theophile Gautier, a narrative about the Exodus; The King's Treasure House (1886) by German Wilhelm Walloth, another romance concerning the Exodus; and Martyr of Golgotha (1887) by Spanish E. P. Escrich, a story of the passion of Jesus. In 1889 Anatole France published the first of his two biblical novels, Belthazar, featuring the visit of the Magi in Bethlehem. His The Procurator of Judaea (1892) is a sardonic narrative in which Pilate fails to recall in later years the trial of Jesus because of the slight impression the event made upon him and contemporary history.

Almost three times as many biblical novels were published in the nineties as in the eighties. They may be considered in three groups: those by translation from foreign tongues, those by British authors, and those by Americans. The third scriptural narrative before 1900 to receive world acclaim belongs to the first category and was shown as recently as 1951 in an elaborate cinema version in technicolor. This spectacular story of the early Christians was entitled Quo Vadis: A Narrative of the Time of Nero (1895) by its Polish author, Henrik Sienkiewicz.

Against the pageantry and glitter of decadent Rome, the author's portrayal of the moral purity and faith of the Christians exemplifies his belief that the novel "should strengthen life, not undermine it; ennoble, not defile it."

Sir Henry Rider Haggard, author of the first English biblical narrative of the nineties, wrote numerous historical novels. The two with biblical themes concern the Exodus: The World's Desire (1890), a half-allegorical romance which includes both the Exodus and the death of Ulysses, and Moon of Israel (1918), a story of Moses. The most colorful of the British novelists of the nineties, however, was Mary (or Minnie) Mackay, who wrote under the pseudonym of Marie Corelli. Her works were translated by Rostand, and among her admirers were Queen Victoria, Edward VII, Gladstone, Tennyson, Ellen Terry, and Oscar Wilde. Her biblical novel, Barabbas (1893), is highly imaginative with lyric measures breaking in at unexpected moments to express an erotic mysticism. Two years after Barabbas, Joseph Jacobs wrote As Others Saw Him: A Retrospect, A.D. 54. Jacobs, an Australian Jew who edited The Jewish Encyclopedia, was also an anthropologist and a historian. Interested in

all problems concerning the Jews, he used his biblical novel to retell the life of Jesus from the Jewish viewpoint. Toward the close of the nineties a fourth British novelist, Charlotte Yonge, included two biblical narratives among her total of more than 150 books. Although many of her novels evidence a close connection with High Anglicanism, she ranged widely through history, with biblical settings for her Pilgrimage of the Ben Beriah (1897), a story of Moses and the Exodus, and Patriots of Palestine (1898), an account of the Maccabean uprisings.

Biblical novels in America became increasingly popular during the nineties. Elbridge Streeter Brooks, editor and dramatic critic, opened the decade with A Son of Issachar (1890). This rather melodramatic and dull story of Judas Iscariot had a good sale, as did his other many books for young people. In the same year Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, a prolific writer who claimed that "life is moral responsibility," entered the field of biblical fiction with her narrative of Daniel, The Master of the Magicians (1890). This novel and Come Forth (1891), a very readable story of the resurrection of Lazarus, were both written in collaboration with her husband, Herbert Dickinson Ward. Six years later two prominent Americans

published biblical novels: William Osborn Stoddard and Henry Van Dyke. Stoddard, known as writer, inventor, and secretary to President Lincoln, wrote over seventy books for boys. Among these are his two biblical stories: The Swordmaker's Son: A Story of the Year 30 A.D. (1896) and Ulric the Jarl: A Story of the Penitent Thief (1899). Van Dyke, clergyman and educator, wrote one of America's best loved Christmas classics, The Story of the Other Wise Man (1896), a narrative of the Magi who spent his life searching for the Child of the Bethlehem Star. In 1914 he published a second story of Jesus called The Lost Boy, picturing the lad Jesus separated from his parents during their pilgrimage to the Temple in Jerusalem.

Within the nineties three Americans--Annie Fellows Johnston, Florence Kingsley, and Robert Bird--began their careers as authors of juvenile biblical fiction. It is true that the juvenile field is a literary division in itself, a complete treatment of which would be outside of the limits of the present study; however, brief mention is made of such books which appear in lists of scriptural novels. Mrs. Johnston, one of the most frequent and popular writers for periodicals of her day and author of the widely-read juvenile series of "Little Colonel" books,

wrote her one scriptural narrative, Joel, a Boy of Galilee (1895), which is a story of the time of Jesus. Neither Bird nor Mrs. Kingsley seems to have any claim to fame except through their biblical stories. Bird's first narrative was a story of Jesus called Jesus, the Carpenter of Nazareth (1891); this was followed in 1895 by Joseph the Dreamer and in 1900 by Paul of Tarsus. Beginning in 1895, the seven novels of Mrs. Kingsley followed in quick succession: Titus, a Comrade of the Cross (1895), the Gospel story ending with the Resurrection; two New Testament narratives called Stephen, a Soldier of the Cross (1896) and Paul, a Herald of the Cross (1897); The Cross Triumphant (1900), a relation of the early days of Christianity from the Jewish standpoint; Love Triumphant; or, A Street Boy of Jerusalem (1905); a fictional biography of Esther entitled The Star of Love (1909); and Veronica (1913), a story about Pilate's wife.

PART II. THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

The largest yield of biblical fiction before witnessed in any single decade came from the press in the first ten years of the twentieth century. Although the books, which number more than forty, indicate the increasing popularity of the genre in America and elsewhere, no particular

pattern is evident; a miscellaneous group of authors emerged, writing about all kinds of biblical heroes and heroines. Robert Bird, Florence Kingsley, and A. J. Church, whose work has already been noted, continued to publish. Many authors, otherwise obscure, tried their hand at scriptural narrative. Several deserve special mention: five Americans and three from Europe.

William Stearns Davis, American history professor and author of several historical novels, gave fictional enlargement to the prophets Daniel and Isaiah in his Belshazzar: A Tale of the Fall of Babylon (1902). Two years later two prominent writers contributed to the field. Elizabeth Miller published her account of Moses called The Yoke (1904), which has several times been favorably compared with the historical romances of the German Egyptologist Georg Ebers, author of Joshua (1867). Miss Miller wrote a second biblical narrative in 1906, entitled Paul of Tarsus: A Tale of the Early Christians. The second biblical novelist of 1904 was Irving Bacheller, popular American writer, whose Vergilius: A Tale of the Coming of Christ is the story of the birth of Christianity against the background of the Roman Empire. He added a second scriptural narrative in 1927 called Dawn: A Lost

Romance of the Time of Christ,[2] in which his Grecian heroine is assumed to be the New Testament woman taken in adultery and released after Jesus wrote in the sand. One other well-known American, the humorist Opie Read, of The Arkansas Traveler, published a biblical novel during the opening decade of the century. His The Son of a Swordmaker (1905) is a juvenile offering whose hero is a Roman soldier in the time of Christ.

The novels of three Europeans--an Italian, a German, and a Russian--were made accessible to English readers at this time by translation. From Italy came an anonymous work, The Life of Saint Mary Magdalen (1903), with a quaint description of Palestine in terms of the scenery and manners of Italy. A humble German carpenter named Peter Rosegger, writing from his prison death cell in simple colloquial style, gave his version of the saving grace of Christ in a book called A Prisoner's Story of the Cross (1905). Feeling himself unjustly accused, he somehow managed to blend his own cause with that of the other Carpenter unfairly sentenced to the Cross. The third European, distinguished Leonid Andreev of Russia, wrote three brief scriptural stories, which were later published under a single cover. The first, Ben Tobit (1903), is an

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[2]This was also published as The Trumpets of God.

account of the Crucifixion from the viewpoint of a merchant standing near the Cross, concerned only with his aching tooth during this momentous event that shook the world; the second, Eleasar (1906), is a terrible story of the life of Lazarus after his resurrection from the dead; the third, Judas Iscariot (1907) which completes the trilogy, is a psychological narrative of the growing madness of Judas after his betrayal of Jesus.

The thirteen biblical novels of the second decade of the twentieth century represent the smallest list to be published in any decade since the 1880's. The names of Robert Bird and Florence Kingsley appear again, as do also those of Henry Van Dyke and Sir Henry Rider Haggard. No others offer unusual interest except that of George Moore, who wrote in 1916 The Brook Kerith. In this novel Moore portrays Jesus as an Essene who does not die upon the cross but recovers under the care of Joseph of Arimathea and grows to feel that his own blasphemy in claiming to be one with God was the cause of his crucifixion. In a dramatic climax, when Paul meets face to face the fifty-two-year-old shepherd whom he has been proclaiming as the Risen Lord, Jesus urges without avail the end of the farce. In this extremely controversial work of

fiction the Syrian landscape is beautifully described from the author's actual observation. An effect of the speaking voice is achieved throughout the story by a method of "oral narrative," which Moore derived from the Irish folk-tale.

After the paucity of biblical novels in the preceding decade, the number of books more than tripled during the twenties. The rationalistic note introduced by Moore continued through many of them with an insistence that characterizes the decade. Both British and Americans are observed among the authors; seven of the novels come to us by translation from other languages.

Abraham Mapu's Ahavath Zion, the first novel to appear in Hebrew literature, was translated in 1920 into English as The Sorrows of Noma, a readable romance woven into the events of the Ahab era. Mapu followed this with a second Old Testament story about the prophet Isaiah, entitled The Shepherd Prince (1937). Russian Aleksandr Ivanovich Kuprin also went to the Old Testament to find his hero for Sulamith: A Prose Poem of Antiquity (1923). His choice of Solomon and the Shulamite peasant girl of the Song of Songs was developed from both traditional and biblical sources into a surprisingly beautiful love story

of poetic delicacy. In the next year a second novel about Solomon was published, coming by way of a French translation from the native Arabic of the author Joseph Charles Mardrus. His Queen of Sheba (1924) is a blend of fiction, legend, and scripture, with more than a touch of Arabic folk lore.

Two Frenchmen, a German, and a Norwegian complete the list of foreign writers of the twenties. The French novelists were Henri Barbusse with his Jesus (1927), a fervent story told as if written by Jesus himself, and Edmond Fleg with three books. A Jew, a poet, and a student of the ancient Hebrew writings, Fleg brought beauty and understanding to his interpretation of the great Hebrew emancipator in The Life of Moses (1928). There is also a sensitiveness to beauty in his dramatic fictional biography, The Life of Solomon (1930). The hero of his Jesus: Told by the Wandering Jew (1935) is the paralytic healed by Jesus, who, according to Fleg, refused to help carry the Cross to Calvary and was therefore condemned to live on earth until Christ's return. Jansen Werner, a German, added another of the popular Moses stories called The Light of Egypt (1928), and Gabriel Scott, of Norway, wrote The Golden Legend (1929), a legendary narrative in which Peter descends from heaven in company with the Lord to

wander a while on earth until he learns the golden gospel of love.

The British biblical novelists of the twenties are introduced by two women: Marjorie Strachey and L. Eckenstein. Miss Strachey called her story David the Son of Jesse (1922), and in it she presents her hero in a human, matter-of-fact sort of way, somewhat in the manner of "depedestalization" used so brilliantly by her brother Lytton. Her frankly irreverent approach is an echo of the rationalistic note that generally characterizes the decade. Miss Eckenstein's book is one of the perennially popular Moses narratives, which she entitled Tutankh Atin (1924). A professional archeologist, she based her novel upon personal research made in an expedition to Egypt.

In the second half of the twenties three popular British authors wrote biblical fiction: Charles William Gordon, better known by his pseudonym, Ralph Connor; John Oxenham, the poet; and Robert Graves, poet and novelist. Gordon's book, The Friendly Four (1927), concerns minor characters of the New Testament. John Oxenham's contribution is more extended with four novels, three of them composing a trilogy about the life of Jesus. The Hidden Years (1925) is a beautiful amplication of the early years of

Jesus through the eyes of an imaginary next-door neighbor and boyhood friend; The Master's Golden Years (1932) continues the story with Jesus' public ministry, and Splendour of the Dawn (1930) closes the trilogy with a narrative of the spreading of the Kingdom. Oxenham's fourth book, Christ and the Third Wise Man (1934), is a delightful story of the youngest of the Magi, from the birth of Christ to the conversion of Paul. The third author, Robert Graves, based his first scriptural narrative, My Head! My Head! (1925), on the meagre information in the Book of Kings about Elisha and the Shunamite woman's son. His second biblical novel, written two decades later, is an extraordinary life of Jesus called King Jesus (1946). Graves uses the thesis that Jesus was born of Mary and Antipater and was therefore actually the heir to Herod, King of the Jews. In his hands biblical events and characters undergo a metamorphosis which tends to strip them of beauty and spiritual meaning so that, although the plot is highly ingenious and consistent, the effect is one of distortion.

There were several noteworthy exceptions to the rationalistic tendency among the American biblical novelists of the twenties. Arthur Cheyney Train, author of

the popular "Mr. Tutt" stories of the Saturday Evening Post, wrote a conservative interpretation of Jesus' ministry, called The Lost Gospel (1925), as a record supposedly discovered on an ancient papyrus in one of Egypt's pyramids. Donn Byrne's Brother Saul (1927) is the portrayal of a militant Saul, "the wolf of the Sanhedrin" who with equal zeal turns to spread Christianity through the world. In Robert Nathan's Jonah (1925), fantasy and irony are pleasingly combined in a retelling of the experiences of that prophet who fled from the command of God. The Almighty's conferences with Jonah and the whale and with the saints in heaven are somewhat playful with an undercurrent of abiding truth. Although not in Negro dialect, they have touched the same vein of gold that Roark Bradford did in his stories of the Old Testament. In the first of these, Ol' Man Adam an' His Chillun (1928), Bradford presents the Negro concept of religion and heaven, where de Lawd is a Person Who watches over His children and entertains them with fish fries. The racy, picturesque language of the colored preacher is oddly inoffensive and full of genuine humor as it portrays amazingly well the deep spiritual purpose of the Bible. Ol' King David an' the Philistine Boys (1930) is a continuation of the same style, retelling David's life.

Three of the first biblical novelists in America to manifest a rationalistic approach present an unusual phenomenon that is hard to explain. Within two years three works of fiction, apparently the only ones on the subject ever to be written, were published about Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. John Erskine opened the series with Adam and Eve: Though He Knew Better (1927), centering his plot around a triangular situation that involved Adam, Eve, and the fictitious Lilith. It is a sophisticated, merry tale, in which Eve is pictured as the composite of all the bad traits of the "unpleasant, nice women" of the world. Erskine published a second biblical narrative, slightly cynical, about King Solomon, which he called Solomon, My Son (1935). In the year following Erskine's Adam and Eve, both Philip Littell and Murray Sheehan came out with stories of Eden. In Littell's This Way Out (1928), a diverting and ironic tale, Adam is represented as growing bored in the Garden and resolving to find true happiness outside. In Sheehan's Eden (1928) Lilith again appears. This time she is pictured as God's concept, quickly rejected, of the evil present in the world. There is evidence in Sheehan's version of a poetic insight that adds beauty to a story told with a lighter vein of humor and a more delicate

irony than one finds in the other two Eden narratives.

Three more American writers published Old Testament stories in the same year. In Giant Killer (1928) Elmer Davis pictures Israel's king as one who always manages to take credit for victory over giants that other men kill. According to Davis, Joab is the real hero, not David. A second Old Testament hero, Moses, is sometimes grand and sometimes pitiful or lustful in the hands of Louis Untermeyer, whose Moses (1928) often reflects the poet's touch as it brings beauty to the story. The third writer, Robert Collyer Washburn, has told the Samson narrative in a mood of jest and burlesque in his Samson (1928), with his irony sometimes evidencing a sly quality quite foreign to the biblical original.

After the large output of biblical fiction in the twenties, the number of such novels dropped slightly in the following decade. The overall tone became more serious. A few authors continued with the naturalistic approach, but most of them seemed to be retelling the stories with the purpose in mind of the original biblical writers. Four novelists deserving comment are British; ten are from the Continent; the others are American.

Among the British authors, John Oxenham, whose works have already been noted, continued to publish. D. H. Lawrence borrowed from George Moore in his story of Jesus, which he called The Man Who Died (1931). As in Moore's The Brook Kerith, Lawrence has Jesus living on after the Crucifixion; like Moore, he produces a narrative both artistic and fantastic. By the time he has converted Jesus to his own conception of life in the company of the lovely priestess of Isis, Moore's book seems mildly conservative. Four years after Lawrence's novel, William George Hardy of Canada initiated the current vogue of Abraham stories with his Abraham, Prince of Ur (1935). Whether influenced by his choice of hero or not, four recent novelists have written about Abraham, a subject almost untouched in fiction before 1935. Hardy uses Moses for hero in his second biblical narrative, entitled All the Trumpets Sounded (1942).[3] Two other British novelists of the decade are Pamela Frankau, who published Jezebel (1937), a convincing fictional recreation of Ahab's wicked queen, and Arthur Eustace Southon, a Methodist clergyman, who wrote a Moses story called This Evil Generation (1939). Later in 1954 he published a second Moses narrative, On Eagles' Wings,

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[3]All the Trumpets Sounded is discussed further in Chapter III.

in which he added modern psychological and scientific analysis to the scriptural narrative.

Biblical novels of the thirties come to us by translation from five languages: Hebrew, French, Russian, German, and Danish. Abraham Mapu, whose Hebrew works have been mentioned, continued to write, as did also Edmond Fleg of France. In 1933 a second French novelist, Jean Des Valliers, wrote a fictional interpretation of Mary, the mother of Jesus, called Mary of Jerusalem. From Russia came two books: Ivan Nazhivin's According to Thomas (1931), an "additional gospel" narrative told by Thomas about his friend Jesus, and Vladimir Zhabotinsky's Samson the Nazarite (1930). Zhabotinsky presents Delilah in a good light and the Philistines with fairness and understanding; his "calculated bawdiness" reflects the naturalism of the twenties.

During this decade Thomas Mann of Germany began his Joseph saga, a work of sufficient importance to demand separate discussion.[4] In addition to Mann, there are three other German novelists: Karl Meissinger, Franz Werfel, and Felix Salten. Meissinger wrote a story of Second

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[4]A consideration of the Joseph saga of Mann is given in the Appendix.

Isaiah, which he called Divine Adventurer (1936), a novel containing rich pageantry and a broad view of comparative thought in the sixth century before Christ. Salten, already a favorite because of Bambi, wrote Samson and Delilah (1931). His Delilah is a woman who really loves Samson, shares his sorrows, and willingly dies with him in the destruction of the temple. Franz Werfel, also well known to American readers through his Song of Bernadette, gave a stirring version of the life of Jeremiah in his Hearken unto the Voice (1938). The unusual framework of the plot presents two tourists standing on the steps of the Temple of Omar in Jerusalem, one of them a writer who has completely lost heart over the death of his wife. Suddenly stricken with apoplexy, he dreams he is back in Old Testament days re-living the life of Jeremiah. As the story ends, he returns to his natural self, a man ready at last to accept his lot.

The last biblical narrative of the thirties translated from a foreign tongue came from Denmark, from the pen of Harald Tandrup. His Reluctant Prophet (1939) presents Jonah as a lowly cake maker of Tyre with an ambition to rise in the world. Scandinavian critics found it hard to decide about the tone of the book: was

it cynical or humorous, witty and subtle or mocking, whimsical or satirical? The religious press of Denmark ruled in favor of good humor and sincerity.

John Erskine, who published again in the thirties, was joined in the American field by Manuel Komroff with his narrative of the Crucifixion called Two Thieves (1931). During the forties Komroff wrote a second popular novel called In the Years of Our Lord (1942), which is treated at length in a succeeding chapter. Mary Borden's narratives about Jesus also received considerable acclaim. Her Mary of Nazareth (1933) centers attention upon Jesus' mother, her home, particularly her relation with Jesus, whom neither she nor her other children could understand. Miss Borden's King of the Jews (1935) begins with the Crucifixion and portrays the early Christian movement. In the same year that her second book was published, two novels were written about Joseph, Mary's husband--the only ones ever to appear with him as subject: Hiram Graham's Joseph, the Husband of Mary (1935), in which Joseph is portrayed as a physician, and Elizabeth Hart's The Husband of Mary (1935), in which the romance of Mary and Joseph is featured. The biblical novels of Sholem Asch, which also are concerned with Jesus and Joseph and Mary, began in the thirties and continued in

the next two decades. Asch, however, like Thomas Mann, demands separate discussion elsewhere in this study.

Two other Americans deserve notice: Lewis Browne because of his previous renown and Zora Neale Hurston for her unusual contribution to biblical fiction. Browne, known for his excellent studies pertaining to the place of the Jew in history, wrote All Things Are Possible (1935), designated in the subtitle as An Apocryphal Novel. Actually it is the story of Mary Magdalen, who is pictured as the epileptic daughter of a mad shoemaker. Mary--vivid, pathetic, and not very bright--has always envisioned the coming of the Messiah; thus she eagerly attaches herself to the group about Jesus, feeling quite at home among the credulous and extremely fallible disciples. Miss Hurston turns to the Old Testament for the setting of her Moses, Man of the Mountain (1939), a humorous version of the Hebrew lawgiver written with eloquence and fervor. This gifted Negro novelist has profited from her study of native life in Haiti and Jamaica under the benefit of two successive Guggenheim Scholarships in this brilliant study of the emancipation of the Jewish people, told as only a Negro can do it.

During the forties, for the first time since the opening decade of the century, the biblical novels numbered more than forty. The general tone continues to be serious. Often the scriptural setting becomes the basis of modern parallels as the authors suggest solutions to current social and political problems. There is a preponderance of American writers, whose books comprise more than three-fourths of the list. All of these are treated fully in Chapter III. A mere handful comes from the presses of Britain and the Continent.

Robert Graves of England and William George Hardy of Canada, already counted among the writers of the preceding decade, continued with other narratives based on the Bible. Gerald Heard, English essayist, wrote an account of the last days of Jesus as if told by Gamaliel. The title, Gospel According to Gamaliel (1946), marks it as one of the ever popular "additional gospel" narratives. Like Joseph Jacobs, in his As Others Saw Him (1895), Florence Kingsley, in The Cross Triumphant (1900), and Sholem Asch, in The Apostle (1943), Heard is concerned with recounting the birth of Christianity from the Jewish viewpoint. His book is discussed further in relation to Asch's The Apostle.

At the end of the decade, a second Canadian, Bertram Brooker, published his story of Barabbas, called The Robber (1949), with an interpretation of the hero as a sort of Robin Hood who robbed the rich to succor the poor. Additional mention is given to this novel in Chapter III.

Among the foreign authors of the biblical novels of the forties was Thomas Mann, whose first three Joseph books were published in the thirties. Besides the closing story of the tetralogy, Mann also wrote in the succeeding decade a fictional interpretation of Moses called Tables of the Law (1945), a novelette appearing originally as a portion of an anthology designed to uphold the moral law against Fascist nihilism. Mann pictures a somewhat flighty Moses who relies on the common sense of Joshua to get things done. He pokes sly fun at bearded Moses until the biblical dignity is all but lost in burlesque. The law-giver's explanation of the Ten Commandments to the Israelites, however, might well be applied to Hitler and his failure to rule wisely without what he scornfully termed those "so-called morals" embodied in "the curse of Sinai."

Further contributions come from two Germans and a Frenchman: Emery Bekessy, Prince Hubertus zu Loewenstein, and Marcel Hamon. Bekessy's Barabbas (1946), which

was written in collaboration with Andreas Hemberger, has modern parallels in the presentation of Barabbas as the materialistic man of action as opposed to Jesus, the man of spiritual force. To Barabbas, violence is the only solution to his country's problems; Jesus believes that eternal powers are at work in the hearts of men. Loewenstein was expatriated by Hitler on political grounds in 1934 but resumed his German citizenship in 1945. Meanwhile he lectured extensively in American universities and now maintains a home in New Jersey. His biblical narrative about Jesus, The Lance of Longinus (1946), is written in English and is one of many novels featuring a Roman soldier who becomes a Christian. With thorough scholarship Loewenstein makes use of the legendary Longinus who was redeemed by Christ's blood as it flowed upon him from the Cross. Marcel Hamon, of France, wrote a third story of Jesus, which he entitled Nightfall at Noon (1949). In it he relates the closing events of Holy Week from the viewpoint of the High Priest's servant whose ear was cut off in the Garden of Gethsemane. All three of these narratives are considered in more detail in Chapter Three.

The present decade of the fifties has begun with a profusion of biblical novels. As the fourth year draws

to a close, the thirty-four novels that have so far come from the press give promise of the largest output yet witnessed in any given decade. Seven of the books are translations, two of which are of unusual excellence. Again, as in the forties, the American writers have generally possessed the field.

The opening year of the decade was the occasion for another multiple treatment of a single biblical figure. Almost simultaneously four novels appeared about Esther. Esther (1950) by Norah Lofts, So Great a Queen (1950) by Paul Frischauer, and Queen Esther (1950) by Effie Lawrence Marshall were released the same year, to be followed in the next by Gladys Malvern's juvenile offering, Behold Your Queen! (1951). These novelists could hardly have copied from one another, for historical narrative, even the least pretentious, requires research that must necessarily occupy an extended period of time. Nevertheless, some spirit moved the four of them to break the silence of the years regarding the colorful oriental queen, a silence which seems to have returned to claim those ancient figures of the Persian romance. The basic Cinderella plot has all the elements for general appeal.

With adolescent readers in mind, Mrs. Lofts makes her version simple and direct. She has Esther win the

King's favor, not only because of her beauty but also by virtue of her lack of sophistication, her human sympathy, and her native intelligence. She is astute enough to realize that the secret of royal favor is the ability to offer the King relief from his boredom. Mrs. Lofts' variation from the biblical source consists in her omission of the original ending, not being willing apparently to spoil the gentle beauty of her Esther with the decided note of vengeance that closes the Old Testament account. In contrast to Mrs. Lofts' interpretation, Paul Frischauer's So Great a Queen emphasizes the lavish oriental atmosphere of the Persian court. Whereas in a movie version junior high school students might be invited for a special matinee of Mrs. Lofts' Esther, Frischauer's narrative could quite suitably be advertised "For Adults Only." In his hands, Ahasuerus, who begins the story inauspiciously at the drunken banquet, develops surprisingly into a likable person who actually seems to merit the love of the peerless Esther. To the usual qualities of intelligence, nobility, and courage found in this heroine, Frischauer adds genuineness and a delightful sense of humor. Like Mrs. Lofts, he spares her from performing her part in the biblical sequel of vengeance.

In Effie Marshall's short novel called Queen Esther, the basic plot ceases to be a mere success story. Probably she includes more spiritual yearning in her version than there is in the original Book of Esther. The cruel selfishness of an absolute ruler forces an element of realism into the bright picture of happy love painted in the two previous novels, and a purely fictional character, Benjamin, discovers through physical suffering and mental anguish the first hope of eternal life. Miss Marshall's additions to the story, however, do not obscure the pedestrian style, which is quite lacking in strength and freshness of expression. Gladys Malvern's concept of the story as a delightful tale of romance and adventure proves to be a more successful revision of the original. Her picture of the pomp, the costumes, the array of cosmetics, the companies of servants in attendance upon the final four hundred candidates for the King's favor transcend all contemporary displays of feminine pulchritude. With Miss Malvern, Ahasuerus is "in every inch a King," Haman is the complete villain, and Esther is beautiful and good. Instead of Miss Marshall's emphasis upon problems and personal tragedy and Frischauer's stress upon oriental court excesses, Mrs. Lofts and Miss Malvern

find the bold outline of the original drama stirring enough to be related as it is: the romantic adventures of the beautiful Jewess who, married to the Persian King, uses her power to save her people from mass slaughter.

During the fifties Edward Francis Murphy, already mentioned for his work in the previous decade, contributes again to biblical fiction with his story of Ruth, The Song of the Cave (1950). This novel and two narratives about Mary Magdalen--Sallie Lee Bell's Until the Day Break (1950) and Victor MacClure's A Certain Woman (1950)[5]--are discussed further in Chapter III. A further 1950 novel, The Good Tidings by William Dieterle,[6] is one of the few narratives with John the Baptist as hero. Dieterle portrays John with a great desire to bring relief to his suffering people. He has never been tempted to throw in his lot with Herod; neither does he remotely wish to join forces with the corrupt High Priest at Jerusalem. He will not forsake his Jewish heritage to align himself with the Romans. His choice therefore seems to lie between the Essenes--a devout fellowship who work with their hands, hold all things in common, glorify freedom, and shun excess

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[5]MacClure is an English novelist.

[6]Dieterle writes under the pseudonym of William Sidney.

emotion of all kinds--and the Zealots, who are organizing to resist by violence their Roman masters. Then God calls him to prepare for the coming of Jesus and the Kingdom wherein love and compassion will prevail over the hatred and violence of evil men.

In the second year of the fifties a new name appears among the biblical novelists, that of Frank G. Slaughter. A physician of renown, he quickly attained popularity in the field of fiction with his best-selling story of St. Luke called The Road to Bithynia (1951). This he followed, perhaps too rapidly, with two other scriptural narratives of lesser merit: The Galileans: A Novel of Mary Magdalen (1953) and The Song of Ruth (1954), both of which receive further consideration in Chapter III. Within the year of Slaughter's first book, Le Gette Blythe published his second novel, A Tear for Judas, which has been previously noted. Also in the same year Vardis Fisher, Idaho novelist who gained fame in 1939 with his excellent historical narrative of the Mormons called Children of God, published his story of Solomon entitled The Valley of Vision (1951). The sixth book in his Testament of Man series, designed to expose the superstitions that beset mankind, The Valley of Vision presents three main characters: Ahijah the prophet,

Solomon the King, and Khate his Egyptian wife. The fundamental struggle is waged between prophet and king, the interpretation of which is plainly stated in the words of Khate: "As for Ahijah, he would keep his people forever in bondage to the tribal laws of desert patriarchs, Solomon would set them free."

Three of the novelists of the early fifties have chosen New Testament heroines: Paul Fox with his The Daughter of Jairus (1951), Katherine Simons[7] with her First the Blade (1951), and Henry Denker with his Salome: Princess of Galilee (1952). Fox's expansion of the brief New Testament incident is discussed in the next chapter. Miss Simons' story is one of many featuring Pontius Pilate and his wife, whom she calls Procla. The plot concerns the maturing of her Christian faith: "First the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear." Complications occur when Pilate tricks Procla into marriage with him to save the life of her lover. Denker, a New York lawyer who has come into prominence in the field of the religious radio program, deals with another New Testament woman who was brought indirectly

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[7]Miss Simons writes under the pseudonym of Drayton Mayrant.

into the story of early Christianity. He presents a high-spirited, selfish, beautiful, ambitious Salome who lives in fear of Herod and of the wilderness prophet John. Instead of making her the usual notorious dancer, the author leads her through purifying fires to become a true Christian, fit to rejoin her courageous lover, a fictitious Roman soldier who has sacrificed everything for his faith in Jesus as Messiah.

During this period three new names appear among American biblical novelists: Thomas B. Costain, Delos Wheeler Lovelace, and Nathaniel Norsen Weinreb. Costain produced a best seller with his The Silver Chalice (1952). Already recognized as editor, historian, and novelist, he here turns his attention to an interpretation of the story of the Holy Grail, one of the best loved and most potentially dramatic themes in Christian legend. The plot is founded upon an imaginary love story, but interest invariably quickens in the presence of the Lord's Cup and those early Christians who cherish it: Joseph of Arimathea, Luke, Peter, and Paul. In his Journey to Bethelehem (1953) Lovelace has retold with tenderness the journey of Mary and Joseph from Nazareth to Bethlehem. Incidental happenings along the way give reality to the familiar story. Weinreb makes good use of his Jewish heritage in

giving fictional re-creation to Nebuchadnezzar and Jeremiah in his The Babylonians (1953). The might and splendor of the Babylonian King as he struggles for Jerusalem is contrasted with the spiritual and ethical power of the prophet. One year after his first novel, Weinreb came forth with a second biblical narrative called The Sorceress (1954). With his selection of Old Testament Deborah as subject, he portrays a heroine almost neglected in fiction. In his hands she becomes beautiful, intelligent, heroic--destined for a leading role in the conquest of Canaan.

At the close of 1954, as this study is ended, five more biblical novels have come from the press. Slaughter's The Song of Ruth and Southon's On Eagles' Wings have previously come to our attention; Wilder Penfield's No Other Gods is discussed later in connection with Mrs. Bauer's Abram, Son of Terah. Evan John Simpson's Darkness is a New Testament story about the months immediately following the Crucifixion before the Apostles went out in faith to build the Christian Church. Maria Ley-Piscator closes the list with her first novel in English, Lot's Wife. Viennese born, Mrs. Piscator has published in three languages. Almost equally proficient as dancer, novelist, and dramatist, she is now

director of the Dramatic Workshop in New York. Her biblical novel concerns Abram, Lot, and Lot's wife and re-creates Canaan and the ancient cities of Ur, Tyre, and Sodom. With an art that touches poetry, she pictures Lot's wife, "the wayward melody," "the suffering chord" in the harmony of God. Driven by a curiosity to understand the mysteries of life, this legendary beauty presses forward, stumbles, and rises until she finally deliberately faces the fires of Sodom in order to behold the heart of life "without fear, superstition, or vengeance," without trembling or regret. It is an interpretation quite different from that of Mme. Kossak-Szczucka in The Covenant but equally as impressive.

Seven biblical novels of the fifties are by foreign authors. The Unknown Disciple (1950) by Francesco Perri of Italy, the first book of a proposed trilogy about the beginnings of Christianity, concerns a Roman soldier who is the son of a Roman governor and a Maccabean mother. Ari Ibn-Zahav, native of Israeli, has written about David in his David and Bathsheba (1951). By use of the flashback technique he portrays the old King dictating his life story to his scribe in order to preserve for posterity an interpretation of life as he has come to know it. Zofia Kossak-Szczucka of Poland,

artist and novelist, reveals a sensitiveness to the finer values of life in The Covenant (1951), her fictional version of Abraham and the ancient world in which he lived. Her novel and Swedish Pär Lagerkvist's powerful New Testament narrative called Barabbas (1951) reach a high watermark in the year 1951.[8]

One German, one Austrian, and one Dutch novelist complete the roll of foreign writers of the first four years of the fifties: Max Brod with his The Master (1951), Julius Berstl with his The Tentmaker (1952), and Johannes Albertus Goris with his The Book of Joachim of Babylon (1952). Brod's book is a portrayal of Jesus as he is seen by those who knew him, through the images in their minds. The whole picture of early Christianity is presented from the viewpoint of the religious and philosophic concepts of the first century world. Berstl pictures a young Paul against the background of Jewish, Greek, and Roman culture; he promises a second volume to deal with Paul in his maturity. The three divisions of Berstl's narrative are indicated by the cities which suggest the stages of the Apostle's development: Tarsus,

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[8]The novels mentioned in this paragraph receive fuller treatment in Chapter III.

Jerusalem, and Damascus. The third author, Goris, whose pseudonym is Marnix Gijsen, has retold the story from the Apocrypha of Susanna and the Elders. His narrator, Susanna's husband, finds that it is not altogether a happy experience to be married to a paragon of virtue.

CHAPTER III

THE BIBLICAL NOVELS OF THE FORTIES

I. Sholem Asch

In approaching the biblical fiction of the forties, it is necessary to turn first to The Nazarene of Sholem Asch, even though his is not, strictly speaking, the first novel of the decade, nor, in fact, does it lie in the decade. The Nazarene appeared in 1939. It is, however, intimately connected with The Apostle (1943) and Mary (1949), with them forming a trilogy.

The position of Asch in American literature is somewhat unusual. He was born in Poland in 1880, coming in 1910 to America, where he was naturalized a decade later. Most of his books have been written in the United States. The problem of his literary classification concerns the fact that he writes in his native Yiddish. Asch's novels rate high among the national best-sellers; the public consumes them as American literature, without bothering about their Yiddish origin. The technical question as to whether or not he is truly "American" will

therefore be waived as we name him our foremost biblical novelist. Next to Thomas Mann, or possibly sharing equally with him, Asch ranks first among all writers of biblical fiction.

The Nazarene, 1939

He began work on The Nazarene in 1907 at the time of his first visit to Palestine. Feeling himself inadequate for the task, he then spent more than thirty years in preparation before final publication in 1939. During this period he made repeated visits to the Holy Land for further study of the land and its people, amassing meanwhile an extensive library and immersing himself completely in the past. In an interview which he entitled "Mr. Asch Returns from the Past," Robert Van Gelder reports Asch as saying: "For years I have lived in the past, in the temples and roads of Jerusalem, studying and writing and rewriting, until the life of today seems less real than the life of that day."[1]

The original plan for The Nazarene developed eventually into three New Testament novels with one

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[1]New York Times Book Review, April 28, 1940, p. 16.

theme: the merit of Israel. This merit, according to Asch, is not in opposition to Christianity. He sees the two faiths bound by a common spiritual heritage and by common concern for morality, justice, and mercy. This notion is intrinsic throughout the trilogy. Without the Jewish yearning for a Messiah, Jesus Christ could not have been born. Without the Jewish synagogues, Paul could not have preached the Risen Lord. Without the devout Hebrew home of Joseph and Mary, the Holy Child would not have had "where to lay his head." Rooted in his faith in the merit of Israel is Asch's intense desire for reconciliation between Judaism and Christianity. It is not for a theological union that he pleads but for a sympathetic understanding between the two faiths that will result in increased good will among all men. The author himself has plainly affirmed his purpose:

> I have never considered deserting the faith of my fathers, and I never intend to do so. My books have made enemies for me in some quarters, but I have shown how deeply rooted Christianity is in Jewish history and Jewish religion. And my intention has been to demonstrate the interdependence of the two faiths, in the hope that mutual understanding may lead to a better world.[2]

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[2]R. G., Saturday Review of Literature, XXXII (October 8, 1949), 20.

The plot is based upon the crucifixion of the Nazarene, thrice retold: once, by the Roman, Cornelius, again by Judas Iscariot, and lastly by Jochanan, a student of Rabbi Nicodemus. These three accounts give the book a tripartite structure. They are set in an extremely complicated framework and are controlled and united by the theme of the Wandering Jew, whom Asch utilizes for his central character--old Pan Viadomsky, who cannot die. He is introduced as living in our day, in Poland, though his first existence was in Palestine, in the days of Jesus. There, as the Roman soldier Cornelius, he directed the Crucifixion. For this act, which he performed with unnecessary taunts and insults, he was punished by God with the curse of living on in one body after another through the centuries until he should merit forgiveness and "the divine tear" should fall to melt the hardness of his heart. As the irascible Viadomsky in modern Poland, he lashes out against the Jews; his frequent tirades bring into sharp focus the tension between Jew and gentile. In this presentation of Viadomsky, the author is guided by a more important consideration: his desire to show forth the merit of Israel and thereby heal the long estrangement between Jew and Christian. Asch is

saying, as it were, "Let us get at once to the heart of the matter: the Crucifixion of Jesus, which brought salvation to the Jews and was 'unto the Jews a stumbling block.'" And how better face the issue than through the soldier who directed what took place on Calvary? Thus Asch makes Cornelius reveal, not at the time of the Crucifixion but after the guilt of centuries has lain heavily upon his soul, the burden of his sin.

In Part II of the novel Asch creates an apocryphal Gospel of Judas, which we are led to assume was removed by Cornelius from the tomb-cave where Judas had hidden it. Centuries later it is in Viadomsky's possession. Unable to read its old script and language, Viadomsky (Cornelius reincarnated) hires a young Jew called Josephus to translate the ancient document. Within this Gospel two men are measured: Judas, the author, who cannot grasp spiritual values, and Jesus, the subject, the fulfillment of messianic dreams. The story is beautifully told of the Rabbi whose name spreads "like an ointment through the land." Asch pictures the mounting eagerness of the people for the advent of the Messiah until Judas, bursting with his question, presses Jesus as to his identity. "Judah [Judas]," replies the Rabbi, "I am only he who

sitteth in thy heart. I am faith. I dwell in each heart in that measure in which the heart can hold me."[3] But Judas' heart has not room enough to encompass such sublimity. His dreams are of an earthly realm. Asch depicts him finally betraying his Rabbi in order to compel Jesus to assert his divinity and so bring in, as Judas believes, the long-awaited Kingdom of God.

The author's basic theme of the merit of Israel reveals itself in Part III in the account of the last days of Jesus as narrated by Josephus, the Jewish scholar. Engaged by Viadomsky in the work of translation, Josephus is drawn into the past until he, like the Pole, resumes his life in it. With almost hypnotic power the old man commands him to revert to his former self, whereupon Josephus takes up his hitherto forgotten existence in biblical times as Jochanan, pupil of Rabbi Nicodemus. For the third time, therefore, the events of Holy Week are related, in this instance through the eyes of a devout Jew, who with his Rabbi represents the best of the Jewish tradition. One feels that the author himself is speaking through them, particularly through Nicodemus,

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[3] The Nazarene, translated by Maurice Samuel (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1939), p. 319.

that wise teacher of the Pharisees for whom his pupils feel love and boundless admiration. In discussion between Nicodemus and Philip the Greek, who is later to become a Christian, Asch pictures the conflict between Jewish and Greek beliefs and has Nicodemus point the way to faith in God. When Philip with his Greek appreciation for beauty, strength, and harmony challenges the faith expressed by Nicodemus, saying, "You do not even know if someone is there, in the darkness, to receive your cry," the wise Rabbi answers:

> "Not into the darkness . . . but into the infinite. And we believe that there, within the infinite, is an Ear which listens, an Eye which sees. . . ."
>
> "But what is faith, Rabbi? Where does one find it?" . . .
>
> "The way to faith is pointed by faith itself. . . . Desire Him, thirst after Him--and you will apprehend Him."[4]

At the book's close, the high and holy tradition of Judaism speaks in the persons of the three Rabbis who dare at their peril to denounce the judgment of the Sanhedrin in condemning Jesus. It was not <u>all</u> the Jews who put him to death, Asch is saying as he has Rabbi Gamaliel

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[4] <u>Ibid</u>., pp. 449-452.

confront the Chief Officer of the Temple, demanding the release of Jesus and pronouncing, after the priest's refusal, the awful curse: "Your name will be wiped out in Israel, and your memory will be recalled with imprecation until the end of days!"[5]

This retelling of the same events three times in The Nazarene becomes in the hands of Sholem Asch a skillful device comparable to Browning's multiple narration in The Ring and the Book. There is a parallel, also, to the four Gospels themselves, which are consciously imitated by the author in style and content, as his three accounts taken together form a magnificent fictional portrayal of Jesus: a Jew who loved his people and who in turn was reverenced by the greatest of the Rabbis. Through both Jew and gentile Asch synthesizes an interpretation of that event that has marked a tragic cleavage between the two faiths.

The Apostle, 1943

In The Apostle, the second novel of the trilogy, the author's sense of mission becomes more urgent and

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[5] Ibid., p. 667.

its expression more direct. Twice he interrupts the narrative to invoke the Almighty, once in supplication and once in thanksgiving. Thus, attempting to understand the mind of Saul, he prays:

> O Father in heaven, Thou Who probest the souls of men, open a little ray of light for me into the bottomless darkness of the human heart, in order that I may penetrate for an instant into its mysteries; send one swift beam for me into the depths, in order that I may see, as in a flash of lightning, the forces that wage war for the possession of a man's soul. . . .[6]

Again, at the end of the novel, in a moving postscript the writer continues:

> I thank Thee and praise Thee, Lord of the world, that Thou hast given me the strength to withstand all temptations and overcome all obstacles, those of my own making and those made by others, and to complete the two works, "The Nazarene" and "The Apostle," which are one work; so that I might set forth in them the merit of Israel, whom Thou hast elected to bring the light of the faith to the nations of the world, for Thy glory and out of Thy love of mankind.[7]

This expression of purpose and gratitude makes clear his reason for retelling the story of Paul.

The biblical delineation of the Apostle needs little retouching for the author's purpose. In the person of one man are presented the conflicting forces

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[6]The Apostle, translated by Maurice Samuel (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1943), p. 149.

[7]Ibid., p. 804.

gathering about the Nazarene and multiplying alarmingly after his death. Here is a man "of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee." If Asch can penetrate this Jew's soul and understand why one day Paul harries the Christians with fanatic zeal and the next day changes direction on the Damascus Road, dedicating his life henceforth to the Rabbi whom he has cursed, then the author will have probed the old wound that has separated Jew and Christian, that healing may result.

Asch presents the young man of Tarsus in the opening scene denouncing the Galilean blasphemers who have given the name of the Anointed of God to one that was hanged. He is a student of Gamaliel in Jerusalem, where he is repelled by the moral depravity about him even as he longs for the Messiah who will change the whole world. Asch pictures him lacking in winsomeness and grace but nevertheless honest in his motives and without selfish ambition. According to the New Testament, Paul, believing the Christians to be preaching false doctrine, fights them with fierce hatred until his name becomes, says Asch, that of the Angel of Death. When he meets the forgiving love of those he flays and stones, the author shows him

torn and shaken before the presence of a spirit he cannot fathom:

> Who had he been who was able to implant such love in the hearts of the simple that they were ready to be thrust out of Israel for his sake? Who was the man who had spread such teachings among the broken of spirit that they could stand before the learned and disarm them with the sword of faith? Who was he who had sent such a light into the dark pits of the poor? Who had given the strength of rocks to the shattered? Who was he whose fall had been interpreted as the supreme victory, whose weakness was seen as unconquerable strength, whose humiliation had been crowned with the glory of the Messiah? Who was he? Who?[8]

Can he, Saul, be mistaken? Is he the sinner? After thus probing Saul's conscience, Asch expresses all the beauty and purity of the early Christians in the prayer of James for the young man starting out for Damascus to persecute the faithful:

> Lord of the worlds, Thou Who are the father of all souls, have compassion toward the soul of the young man, Saul of Tarshish. Lift it from the nethermost depths into which it has fallen. Open his eyes, that he may see the light of Thy Holy servant, Yeshua [Jesus] the Messiah, whom Thou hast sent to us as comforter. Turn his heart to the good, in order that he may recognize and eschew the evil which he has done; and be compassionate to him in the hour of his repentance; strengthen him then, that he may not fall into despair and sin, but rely on Thy grace, and find strength in Thy faith; and bring him back upon the path of Thy teaching. Amen.[9]

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[8] Ibid., p. 161.

[9] Ibid., p. 172.

Asch gives a vivid account of that fateful journey, of Paul's consequent missionary activity, and of his mellowing through the years of his ministry. So it is that, in the tumult of conflicting emotions and intellectual struggle in the heart and mind of Saul of Tarsus, Asch pictures the larger discordant elements separating orthodox Judaism and the growing Christian community. As they are resolved in Paul to bring to his harassed soul peace and harmony and active good will, so, suggests the author, may the strained relations between Jew and Christian be eased.

It is not alone in the person of Paul that the problem of reconciliation is posed and solved. Asch faces it directly as he defines the difference between the two faiths and the cause of their conflict. It is not easy to explain, for instance, what marks the separation between Rabbi Gamaliel--just and kind and of infinite wisdom--and James, who utters the Christ-like petition in behalf of Saul as he goes abroad hunting down the Christians. Once the author gives the answer in this fashion:

> If for the Jews the belief in the Messiah was the continuity of their old religion, a fulfillment of Prophetic messages, and a miracle for which they had long waited, for the gentiles it was a completely new birth.

> God had breathed a new soul into them. The old life of impurity fell away, and a new life began for them. They felt that for the sake of their portion in the Messiah it was incumbent on them to guard their lives from uncleanliness, and to practice the virtues which the Messiah had taught. Love, devotion, and faith were the commandments and virtues; this was their law, as binding upon them as _their_ law upon the Jews.[10]

When the Jews look upon the gentiles as strangers who have broken into the Father's house to steal their inheritance, Asch has Paul patiently explain that only the circumcised _in heart_ can enter into the Kingdom. When the elderly Rabbi Sosthenes suffers at the hands of Corinthian Christians, he and Paul _together_ achieve a spirit of love and forgiveness that melts dissension between the two congregations. Often the Apostle's preaching of the Messiah seems to the Jews like a call to false worship, and then again they watch with awe as the love of Christ transforms old pagans and sanctifies their homes. In every pagan city the Jewish community is like an oasis; without a synagogue Paul cannot begin his ministry. Ever proud of his heritage, he writes his Epistle to the Hebrews as a Jew to the Jews, picturing the Messiah as the eternal High Priest. And in the end Asch portrays the Jews

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[10] _Ibid._, pp. 345-346.

suffering with the Christians for the burning of Rome, the Romans not being able to distinguish Christian from Jew as both worship Jehovah God, both refuse to bow to Caesar, and both die with the triumphant Shema upon their lips. It is the old Jewish Rabbi to whom Asch gives the last word when the worshipers gather on the Sabbath after the execution of Peter and Paul:

> See you not what has happened in Rome? The more they burn the believers in the Messiah, the more they fling them to the beasts, the mightier grow their numbers. Behold! Rome went forth against Jerusalem with the sword, and Jerusalem went forth against Rome with the spirit. The sword conquered for a while, but the spirit conquers for ever![11]

The picture of Paul the Apostle is strong and convincing against the background of the young Christian Church and the religion of Israel that has given it birth. In his undertaking of reconciliation Sholem Asch has exercised in his choice of hero an urgency akin to that of Jesus in his parable of the Good Samaritan. His hero is not only a Christian but an intensely devout Jew who has experienced a conversion to the new faith. So sensitively has he penetrated into the mind of Paul that the reader

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[11] Ibid., p. 804.

marvels how this writer, a Jew, can so sympathetically interpret the Christian belief. The perceptive reader will see other lines, inherent and significant. If one Jew can understand one Christian, cannot the matter be multiplied indefinitely--and reversed? Cannot the two stand shoulder to shoulder in a world braced against them?

Mary, 1949

In the third novel, Mary, Asch continues his effort toward reconciliation of Jew and Christian. Let it be granted, he seems to suggest, that Jesus was "conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary," and let the reader then look at the Son through the eyes of Mary, who with the tenderness and understanding of a mother can never stop loving her child. But it was Jehovah's choice of this mother, the author is stressing, which most surely indicates the interdependence of Judaism and Christianity. It was Mary, the Jewish maiden, who was selected for the holy task, and it was the Hebrew Joseph who served as earthly father. Together they directed the Lad of Nazareth in his crucial formative years, guiding him through the faith of Israel to eternal truth.

Perhaps because of the venerable position of father in the Jewish home, the reader looks first at Joseph. Asch portrays him as the son of a formerly wealthy member of the House of David who had fled before the wrath of Herod to take sanctuary in the wilds of the Judaean hills. Thus Joseph has known poverty, willingly allowing the honor of the ancestral heritage to merge into the hope of welcoming a Redeemer. His carpenter's skill has made him feel like God's partner in creation, and his innate gentleness and humility lead him to seek out the lowliest of men that he may alleviate their burdens with the hope of the coming of the Messiah-King.

Asch describes Joseph's dismay in hearing the ugly talk about Mary after their betrothal. Without waiting to consult her, he unhesitatingly assumes the guilt, knowing full well that he will bring upon himself disrepute. Unable to comprehend Mary's joy in her conception, yet unwilling to accuse her of wrong, he relinquishes his dream of building his house with her in Israel and silently prepares to leave Nazareth. Then it is that Asch, utilizing the Gospel narrative, has a vision come to him revealing the plan of God, and Joseph

answers: "I submit. . . . How shall I thank Thee, O my God, my heavenly Father, that Thou hast found me worthy to be a guardian to her."[12] From him the author has the Child Jesus learn that true cleanliness is of the heart and that real wealth is not measured in ornaments or gold. He pictures in Joseph no rebellion against death when it approaches; looking upon the enduring health of Mary and Jesus, he fervently thanks the Lord that he has been permitted to fulfill his own appointed task.

By all human measures, Joseph is portrayed as worthy to serve as earthly guardian for his sacred charge. But with Mary the reader encounters mundane grace and something more. Asch indicates at once a serene beauty in the atmosphere surrounding her who is to be the mother of Jesus. The home where she lives with her widowed mother is a place of benediction for all who enter. Within the plain limestone walls Hannah and her daughter devoutly perform all the customary sacred duties and with willing hearts go about the daily chores. Making no

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[12] Mary, translated by Leo Steinberg (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1949), p. 54.

attempt to bypass the miraculous, the author pictures the maiden as one whose religious fervor has already caused her to see visions and hear voices.

After the angel's visitation Asch envelopes Mary with an aura of sanctity. One of the most moving scenes in the novel concerns the reaction of the intimate little group about her as she sings the Magnificat in the mountain retreat of Elizabeth and the dumb Zachariah. Being already great with child, Mary has come here with faithful Joseph, who has witnessed on their journey a miraculous protection from wild beasts as Mary lay sleeping unafraid, a creation of Asch's which recalls the early apocryphal birth stories. Now Elizabeth embraces her cousin while the two men hold their breath, for the air of the cave is charged with a spirit not of this world. The author continues:

> Then Miriam [Hebrew for Mary] rose, her face so radiant one would have said the sun had set behind the whiteness of her skin, and she opened her lips in a song of praise, singing for sky and earth, for man and angel, for the quick and the dead, singing to all the ends of the earth from the day of creation to the end of time.
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> "My soul doth magnify the Lord," she sang. . . .
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> Miriam stopped, but none of her companions dared to break in on her silence. They feared to move lest their gross flesh impinge on the invisible convocation of souls by which they felt themselves surrounded. But as Miriam continued standing in the center of the room,

> they dropped to their knees and the first sound to be heard was Elisheva's [Elizabeth's] joyful sobbing. Joseph, too, wept, still without saying a word. Only the priest, in a sudden spasm of uncontrollable exultation tore himself loose from his wall, ripped down the curtain at the mouth of the cave, and bellowed across to the mountains, into the night, the inhuman cry of the dumb.
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> It faded, inarticulate and echo-borne, from range to range--the first annunciation to the world of the Messiah's coming.[13]

To Mary's contact with the spiritual world Asch adds a novel touch reminiscent of apocryphal literature as he gives her the power to transmute flowers and odors. Thus during her pregnancy she noticed that people and plants and flowers appeared to her in the light of their true value, not as they seemed to others. Taddi the tanner, one of Asch's most successful imaginary characters, was goodhearted and spiritually sensitive, but all knew that the stench of soaking animal hides hovering in his house was almost too strong for a visitor to endure. Now, however, when Mary approached his dwelling, her "nostrils dilated pleasantly, as though the tanner had been soaking his skins in sweet-smelling oils."[14] The garden of the Edomite incense planter, on the other hand, had the odor

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[13] Ibid., pp. 78-79.

[14] Ibid., p. 93.

of burning brimstone, because his incense was sold for idol worship. Cactuses did not prick Mary's feet, and nettles had the softness of moss; but the iris field of the Edomite suffocated her so that a heavenly visitor was sent to rescue her from the powers of darkness that would have prevented the birth of her child.

There are times when Mary is denied divine assistance. In a very real sense Asch has the Jewish mother struggle toward her glory, from the day of her acceptance of God's grace to the maturity of her strength when she is willing for her Son to be led to Calvary. She experiences a growing love for her child and cries out to God to be allowed to accompany him to the end of his earthly days. The prayer is granted, but never is the sacrifice demanded of her an easy one. Then Jesus reaches manhood and the sign is given him to begin his ministry. Still the author has him tarry, awaiting his mother's willingness for him to set his foot upon the path of pain and death. Stubbornly her mother-love stands in his way--in the way of the world's redemption--until she finally understands that to shield him would be to deprive the broken-hearted of consolation and the poor of hope. Asch makes it plain that Mary does not have to be a witness at

the Cross but that, rejecting the chance to be spared the agony, she conquers personal cowardice to take her place at Golgotha, praying humbly, "Father, let me stand by his altar. Stripped of Thy grace, let me be no more than his mother."[15]

It is understandable that the story of Mary must be also that of her Son. Asch pictures a tender, beautiful relationship between mother and child. Tinoki[16] she called her baby, and "Tinoki, Tinoki," she called to him softly when he appeared before the wondering apostles who sat grieving over his death. The author has the eyes of the little boy alert to everything about him and his lips forever asking questions: What is sin? Why do animals kill for food? Why must a lamb be offered for sacrifice? Will God ever change the hearts of men? Does God not also love the gentiles? It is this inexhaustible spiritual curiosity which distinguished Jesus from his younger brother James, who accepted without question the teaching of the synagogue school and never dilly-dallied on the way home. Asch makes this burning desire to know the cause of

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[15] Ibid., p. 414.

[16] Tinoki is the Hebrew word for baby.

the twelve-year-old Lad's lingering in Jerusalem among the doctors of the Temple. It is spiritual hunger which culminates in his perfect knowledge of the Kingdom of God.

This third novel of Sholem Asch's New Testament trilogy attempts the incredibly difficult feat of rehearsing one more time the Christian gospel, tuning it, moreover, to his original commitment: the manifestation of Israel's merit. In Mary's selection for divine favor Asch affirms this merit. The flower of Jewish womanhood, she has been chosen as the Mother of our Lord, her grief and glory pictured as she watches her Son steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem. Whenever the author has felt the need of an addition from folklore, tradition, the Apocrypha, or from his own fertile imagination, he has used the material without apology. The portion of the story dealing with the coming of Mary and Joseph to the inn in Bethlehem and the birth of the Child in the stable deserves a place with the loveliest of our yuletide classics. Asch is not writing primarily for historical accuracy; he is concerned with telling in words of mystic beauty the story of a woman about whom the world really knows very little. This he does reverently and well.

Thus the New Testament trilogy stands completed: The Nazarene, The Apostle, and Mary--one work to bind together Jew and Christian, to "set forth . . . the merit of Israel, whom Thou hast elected to bring the light of the faith to the nations of the world . . ." With the simplicity of the original Gospel accounts the narrative unfolds in The Nazarene, elaborated, however, in the weird and ingenious framework of the Wandering Jew legend. The Apostle dispenses with all artificial structure in the most direct treatment of all as Paul gathers within himself the insurgent elements and achieves the victory. It is a solid book infinitely worth the effort demanded of a willing reader. Asch then concludes the trilogy with the tender and lovely portrait of Mary. The three novels plead eloquently for the interdependence of Judaism and Christianity, and they may well fulfill the author's hope of a mutual understanding that will lead to a better world.

Moses, 1951

The trilogy is complete, but Asch's purpose in setting forth the merit of Israel is further accomplished in Moses (1951), which, with his previous three biblical novels,

actually forms a tetralogy united by this theme. As if for sheer joy in his Jewish heritage, he turns at last from New Testament times to picture Moses, great deliverer and lawgiver of the Hebrews. Everywhere the proportions are epic and grand. Through Moses a nation emerges from slavery and, hungering for righteousness, finds God on Sinai. Majestic and kingly, the Deliverer shapes his people's destiny until, spent with his labors and the weight of years, he gives a final blessing to the Bnai Israel and ascends Mount Pisgah to receive "the kiss of God."

II. Frank S. Stuart

Caravan for China, 1940

From the significant contribution of Sholem Asch, attention is turned to the single work of an author of lesser importance, Frank S. Stuart. With his tale of adventure featuring Simon of Cyrene and called Caravan for China (1940), the biblical novels of the 1940's properly begin. Although this New Testament character appears in a minor way in many stories, few novelists have made him the central figure. Since T. H. Shastid's allegorical Simon of Cyrene in 1923, Stuart's book is the first to make as hero the man briefly described in three of the

Gospels as a passerby from the country, who was compelled to bear the Cross of Jesus to Golgotha. With such meager factual information, the fiction writer may go far afield with his hero before bringing him finally to Jerusalem to fulfill his appointed task.

Frank Stuart has used this liberty to make Simon a black-haired giant of a man, one to be reckoned with and a legend in his own day. "Black Simon" he was called, this huge, dashing hero with muscles that "rippled pantherine under his satin golden skin." The author shows the brave and indomitable leader of men in love with a beautiful red-haired Amazon named Helen, who had been sold into slavery but had escaped from her Roman master and was currently reported to be in China--the goal of the caravan now organized for her rescue as well as for the lucrative trade involved. Simon is then pictured as the captain of the caravan, hired by its owner, who secretly planned to kill the hero before returning to Rome and to recover Helen for his own desires.

The plot is crowded with death traps and daring escapes as the caravan moved on to Baghdad and Samarkand, across the Gobi desert, beyond the Great Wall of China to the Emperor's palace--and back to Rome. Besides murder

and intrigue within the ranks, Stuart narrates a procession of breath-taking events: a frightful storm at sea, starvation and thirst in the desert, the threat of a forced Chinese marriage for Simon, torture, daring rescues, battles with Bedouins, mutiny, pursuit by a Chinese army, a desperate flight on camels stolen from the Chinese imperial stables, sword wounds, fever, and the final happy marriage of hero and heroine. There are beautiful ladies and hateful villains; there is a thrilling mixture of bravery and cowardice, heartbreak and joy, hopes and fears, victory and defeat. But with the charmed existence of Steve Canyon of the comic strip, Simon weathered it all and appeared at length in Jerusalem for Holy Week.

Stuart has attempted after a fashion to prepare the reader for a biblical ending by foreshadowing the events that now were to come to pass. In far-off China, for instance, the Emperor was made to inquire about a Jewish king foretold by his astrologers. In serious mood the hero himself pondered the problem of eternity and wondered about the existence of the gods, whereupon Helen, who earlier in the story had been made briefly to encounter Jesus at Nazareth, answered him by saying, "That

Carpenter who gave us water at Nazareth. . . . He said there was a God, just one God for all of us."[17] The author then goes on to show both Simon and Helen eager to learn more of this Jesus, and he has Simon curtly refuse an extremely profitable offer during Holy Week to engage in a plan for Roman troops to capture this so-called Messiah. Stunned to hear of the Carpenter's arrest, he dashes out into the crowded streets of Jerusalem to find out what he can do about it; then it is that the author has Simon witness Jesus carrying his cross to Calvary and plunge forward to lift the burden on his own huge shoulders.

In portraying all his characters--Romans, Chinese, Jews, patricians, and slaves--the author does not differentiate between racial characteristics in manner of speech, for all use the same breezy, modern idiom except one of the soldiers, who speaks a dialect suspiciously like Cockney. For such dialogue to appear in serious biblical fiction would doubtless give the effect of incongruity; in this dashing tale of adventure, however, it is in keeping with the general tone of excitement and violent action. Though not intrinsic to the story, Simon's biblical appointment does not violate the author's delineation of a strong, generous hero who was certainly big enough in heart and body

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[17] Caravan for China (Garden City, New York: Country Life Press, 1941), p. 270.

to carry the cross for Jesus. That he assumed his burden willingly instead of under constraint is Stuart's fictional variation from even the brief scriptural incident.

Although Simon of Cyrene has not often been made the hero of biblical novels, he is usually presented as a minor character already introduced into the narrative before his participation on the road to Calvary. In Florence Marvyne Bauer's Behold Your King (1945), Simon is the servant who accompanies the hero Jonathan to Jerusalem. An accomplished traveler as well as friend and counselor, he is, moreover, a skilled buyer of silks, woolens, and linens to send back to Jonathan's mother, who manages a thriving business in Alexandria. Like Stuart's Simon, he is a huge man, who is physically able to carry the cross of Jesus. Unlike him, however, he is pressed into service, in accordance with the New Testament record. Asch, in The Nazarene, also makes Simon a minor character already a part of the narrative before the Crucifixion. In Part Three of the novel, narrated by Jochanan, the disciple of Nicodemus, Simon is the father of Rufus, disciple of Nicodemus and closest friend of Jochanan. Simon, with Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea, form part

of an earnest little group that meet for study of the esoteric lore of the coming of the Messiah. At the time of his biblical task on the march to Calvary, Simon is evidently unaware of the tragic proceedings as he issues suddenly from a side street. As if returning from his fields, he carries on his shoulder his spade and pruning hook. In amazement he sees Jesus fainting beneath his load, and slips through the soldiers to throw himself at the Nazarene's feet. He does not volunteer to help as does Stuart's Simon. The Roman soldiers seize him and compel him to bear the Cross, and Simon replies with dignity: "A Jew must always be prepared to carry the cross for another Jew."

Few biblical narratives have introduced as many elements of popular fiction as Stuart has assembled in Caravan for China. In this regard, Sallie Lee Bell in Until the Day Break (1950) and Frank G. Slaughter in The Galileans (1953) offer lively competition. Mrs. Lee's story has Mary Magdalene sold as a young girl by her destitute father to Herod. She becomes his favorite concubine and is happy enough until she falls in love with Judah, an honorable young Jew, who goes mad when he discovers her relationship to the Tetrarch. When Herod learns of their

love, he orders Mary to wander along the highways as a harlot to earn money to feed her insane lover. To refuse will mean torture for Judah. Finally Jesus cures Judah, but Herod, still jealous, sends the lovers to the arena to face the lions, which, however, are not loosed against them because of the sudden death of Herod. Slaughter's The Galileans has, like Stuart's and Mrs. Bell's stories, all the thrills of melodrama. His heroine, like Mrs. Bell's, is Mary Magdalene, who, also, is sold early in life as a slave. Her master, however, is as a kind father to her. Her promise of happiness with her betrothed, Joseph, is shattered when she is ravished by a Roman Tribune, and she is thereafter possessed by the demon of vengeance. She makes an unsuccessful attempt to commit suicide; she fails in her effort to murder her seducer. She is hypnotized and buried alive, to be rescued by Joseph; then she sells herself into slavery to the hated Roman in order to save her sweetheart from death. It is in this final position of ignominy that she comes under the influence of the Nazarene and is sustained by a heavenly serenity. With such romantic and sensational embellishments, Stuart, Mrs. Bell, and Slaughter have found difficulty in giving substance to the biblical

elements, which thrive better in a simpler setting. For thrilling adventure and exciting romance, Caravan for China offers entertaining reading as an escape from troubles and monotony.

III. Irving Fineman

Jacob, 1941

In the year following Stuart's book, a successful engineer, Irving Fineman, directed his attention to the field of biblical fiction. The popularity of his first novel, published anonymously, had encouraged him to further literary efforts, so that, in time, he came to devote himself entirely to writing. In planning his biblical novels, his Jewish heritage undoubtedly influenced his choice of Old Testament subjects: Jacob: An Autobiographical Novel (1941), written from a man's viewpoint; and Ruth (1949), a woman's view of a man-made world.

In the astonishing array of biblical novels of the last century and a half there have been comparatively few dealing with the ancient patriarchs. When Fineman published Jacob, he offered the first fictional version featuring Jacob in the title. Thomas Mann actually makes

Jacob share the hero's role with his famous son in the Joseph saga, although Joseph's name appears alone in the heading. It is probable, moreover, that Adelaide O'Keefe's almost-forgotten Patriarchal Times (1811) dealt with Jacob in some manner, but we have no way of verifying the conjecture.[18]

Jacob, as its subtitle suggests, is an autobiography. In form it is Jacob's record of his life, ending shortly after Rachel's death while Joseph is still a little child. It is an interpretation of life, filled with tender counsel to his young son, as he explains (with a touch of ill-advised witticism on the author's part):

> All I am hoping to do with this tale is to prepare you for that inevitable struggle in which you must prove yourself; so that you may rise from whatever pit into which your strong and jealous brothers may cast you--so that you will rise triumphant, not only to save yourself but to save them too from the consequences of their own unenlightenment and destiny.[19]

Jacob wants to pass on to Joseph a sound philosophy that will enable him to see life whole and rightly proportioned: "a fragment cut from the endless tapestry of life." His

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[18]The book is not accessible to me. It is listed in Bibliotheca Britannica (Edinburgh: Archibald Constable and Company, 1824).

[19]Jacob: An Autobiographical Novel (New York: Random House, 1941), p. 257.

first-person viewpoint lends unity and immediate significance to the patriarchal record.

Fineman's hero is much like his counterpart in Mann's first Joseph book. Like him he is intelligent and ambitious, with a keen, curious, sensitive mind. From rich memories of the past Jacob writes, for Joseph alone, his recollections of Rachel and the baby ways of her first-born son. It is a family chronicle, related with spiritual and philosophical interpretations that the narrator has learned from a life filled with significant, though sometimes painful, experience. And it is a man's story, with Jacob often expressing his annoyance at the inexplicable perversity of womankind.

In retelling and motivating the familiar narrative of Genesis, Jacob is made to stress particularly his relationship with Esau: their physical and spiritual differences, his own departure from home because of his brother's anger, and his subsequent return from Haran. He describes at length his sojourn with Laban, who valued material things more than did the young nephew, whose questioning mind was more concerned with understanding the processes of nature and the working of the human mind. Both men amassed wealth, but Laban, according to Fineman, was the trickster devoted to the unscrupulous accumulation of property beyond his needs,

whereas Jacob had a driving thirst to know earth's secrets--and heaven's too--and a haunting dream of building a society in which men might dwell as brothers. To Jacob, Esau and Laban were not unlike. "What brute strength was to Esau, trickery was to Laban; where Esau said, I take what I want by force, Laban said, I take what I want by craft."[20] Unlike them, Jacob was spiritually sensitive; for him life had a deep meaning.

Mann's Joseph and His Brothers (the first Joseph book) ends with Rachel's death, but Fineman has Jacob continue the narrative long enough after his great sorrow to learn to appreciate Leah. Until this time she has meant little more to Jacob than a symbol of his bitter disappointment at Laban's trickery in keeping him from Rachel. With Rachel's radiance beside him, he had no need of Leah, though she had borne him--she and the concubine Zilpah--eight sons. Now in his grief and loneliness he beholds her big heart, her kindness, and her courage. She is a welcome and a peaceful harbor after the storm. He listens with amazement to her well-seasoned, though highly modern, philosophy as she speaks of the consolation of the homely woman:

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[20] Ibid., p. 84.

She doesn't suffer the fears and irritations of the beautiful woman who, when she carries and bears children resents, even though she may not be aware of it, the man who is responsible for spoiling the beauty of her body; especially when she knows he is the kind of man to whom beauty is important and whose love may be entirely dependent on that beauty. That's why men are often happiest with homely women. Though you would have a hard time convincing one who hadn't tried it. Mostly they find that out for themselves after half a life-time.[21]

As in Mann's Joseph saga, there is often within Jacob a reference to that pattern of repetition which can be traced through the generations, especially in the annals of the Hebrews. The author has Jacob point this out to Joseph in the example of the God-chosen heir fleeing the wrath and jealousy of his brothers and competitors. To protect the favored one, Sarah had to send Ishmael away into the desert lest he do harm to Isaac; Rebekah dispatched Jacob himself, to keep him out of reach of Esau's anger; Rachel protected Jacob from the wrath of her father, Laban. Some day in the future the young Joseph must face a similar hatred in his older brothers for their father's favorite son. When Isaac died and Esau and Jacob dug his grave, the pattern continued, and Jacob marvels again at life's strange habit of repetition. The two brothers, he

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[21] Ibid., p. 238.

says, buried Isaac just as Isaac and Ishmael had buried Abraham, "and just as you, Joseph, and your brothers will bury me, your father, in this same earth, since death, like life, is immortal."[22] Then, completing his chronicle, Jacob urges Joseph to take up the task now and write what he will on the pages yet blank before him--

> adding to it from your own memory for the good of the Jacobs among your own sons--for those men of sensibility and good will whom you will, with love, I trust, bring forth to take up in their turn this progress which is our life and to which I here leave you without fear or regret.[23]

Fineman has given his book fictional unity through the autobiographical aspect. Even in depicting the passionate days of Jacob's youth, he maintains a dignity of tone fitting for a father who tempers the narrative for the ears of a child. Jacob's constant philosophical interpretations for the benefit of Joseph tend at times, however, to become dull, and the author's twentieth-century attitude toward sex and human relations in general are pleasing to the reader but anachronistic in the thinking of patriarchal Jacob. Just how much Fineman owes to Mann's first Joseph book, which preceded Jacob by seven years, it is impossible to say; certain similarities previously mentioned are probably without conscious imitation by Fineman,

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[22] Ibid., p. 291.

[23] Ibid., pp. 294-295.

who is a better artist than the usual writer of biblical fiction. His plan and most of his interpretation are his own and artistic. Jacob is a readable story, related without undue decoration.

Ruth, 1941

For his second biblical novel, Fineman turned from Jacob the Patriarch to Ruth, one of the great mothers in Israel. Instead of the autobiographical method with a man as narrator, the author now chooses to relate his story from a woman's viewpoint. The lovely Moabitess is the heroine, but it is Naomi who represents the accumulated wisdom of Jewish womanhood, a judgment seasoned with wit and courage. It is for love of her that Ruth accompanies her to Bethlehem; it is Naomi's grandchild who is born to father kings.

Fineman seems to have chosen his subject for the same reason as did the Old Testament author, who faced the problem of the treatment of foreigners in his home land. In a day when returning exiles and strangers found scant welcome among the proud native born of Israel, the ancient writer pointed the way to intelligent cooperation and spiritual assimilation that might lead to national unity

and good will. Concerned with the parallel social problem of our day, Fineman also emphasizes the plight of Ruth as if to remind the reader of our own quick suspicions of the foreign born and our arrogant assumptions of superiority, which must come to terms with the growing recognition of minority groups within this land. Her experience recalls our outmoded immigration and naturalization laws, which discriminate purely on a racial basis and damage our relations with the people of Asia. Fineman has Ruth speak for all who have chosen to cast their lot in a new land when she says:

> I came into the land of Israel because Mahlon weaned me away from the ways of Moab and taught me to love the ways of Israel, which he had kept in his heart. And you who are Israelites merely because you were born so have no cause to scorn one who has chosen to be an Israelite.[24]

For his purpose, Fineman varies little from the basic biblical plot; his method is to give imaginative expansion to the realization of the basic characters, authenticity to the physical and cultural background, and intensity to the original theme.

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[24] Ruth (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1949), p. 84.

His leading characters are those of the scriptural narrative: Naomi, the returning exile; Ruth, the foreigner; and Boaz, the native born. Fineman conceives of Naomi as a determined old woman who speaks her mind whenever occasion arises. He begins the story with her journey on donkey back to Bethlehem, after the death of her husband and two sons in Moab. Naomi spends the time instructing Ruth, who has chosen to accompany her, in Hebrew history and indeed in the ways "of all mankind since the beginning." She keeps on talking even after Ruth falls asleep at night. She outtalks and outwits marauders who waylay them. She plunges bodily into the fray when the old crones at the city gates insult her. She argues with the morose prophet Zvuv (an invention of the author), and she lectures Boaz on his need for a wife. "Go on, you old goat!" she screams at beady-eyed Tobias, who comes to bargain for her property. In short, Fineman sacrifices her biblical dignity to make Naomi a shrewd, spicy, strong-willed character, and certainly a garrulous one. It is she who urges the rights of woman in a man-made world.

Ruth is pictured as the gracious young matron, "straight and proudly beautiful," the "embodiment of ripe summer to come." On her brow she wears the golden amulets

of Ashtar, not because she still worships Moab's gods but because her husband Mahlon used to think them becoming to her; the Hebrews are exceedingly offended at sight of these heathen ornaments. The religious offense adds difficulty to a situation already fraught with tenseness involving the presence in Bethlehem of a member of a hostile people. That she is beautiful does not add to her popularity with the mothers of marriageable daughters. But, as in the Old Testament story, by her gentleness and womanly grace Ruth wins her way among the townfolk and eventually is the chosen bride of the powerful Boaz.

Fineman's Boaz is somewhat like Shakespeare's Benedick in his reluctance to renounce single blessedness. It is only through the persistence of Naomi that he finally meets his kinsman Tobias at the city gates to conclude the legal arrangements for the ceremony. On the eve of his wedding Boaz is still troubled with doubts; but wise old Naomi stanchly wins her argument as she feeds him bread and wine: "Surely I sent her down to you. . . . Since the time of our mother Eve men have blamed women for giving them what they most wanted."[25]

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[25] Ibid., p. 274.

The basic problem constitutes the plot. A foreign woman, a Moabitess, enters Bethlehem. How can she become an accepted citizen? Can she be received by loyal Israelites? Naomi warns Ruth to remain in Moab, reminding her of the old Mosaic injunction: "An Ammonite or a Moabite shall not enter into the assembly of the Lord, because they met you not with bread and water on the way when ye came forth out of Egypt." Ruth, choosing nevertheless to cleave unto her mother-in-law, is looked upon in Bethlehem "with malice by the women and with wantonness by the men, and with suspicion by all in time of danger."[26] Tobias, Naomi's nearest of kin, scorns marriage with a Moabitess, and the women of the city refuse to allow Ruth's bread to be offered with theirs in the tabernacle. "'Heed thyself from the strange woman!'" sour old prophet Zvuv shrilly warns the young men. Even after Boaz has acknowledged his love for the gentle stranger, doubts assail him as he fears that he may have succumbed to the wiles of Moab. But his doubts vanish as the morning mist when Ruth stands before him at last: Ruth who is better to Naomi than seven sons and worthy to

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[26] Ibid., p. 252.

be the mother of kings. The knotty social problem has been solved, as in the Bible story, through the love of a man for a maid. Foreigners can be spiritually assimilated; they can even make contributions of essential value to posterity. Kindness and consideration for minority groups insure increasing happiness and good will among men. Perhaps in such an atmosphere another David will come forth to lead us.

Fineman has been unusually successful in portraying the social customs and religious rites of the Hebrews. He pictures the offering of the First Fruits upon the fiery altar, the awe-inspiring repetition of the Ten Commandments, and the folk revelry that follows the religious ceremonies. He features the Feast of Weeks in lively detail as young men and maidens sing antiphonally the mating songs of their people. He creates left-handed Gibbor to present the human side of the sons of Benjamin, who in their need for wives plan their biblical raid on the virgins at Shiloh. Probably the best passage in the entire novel, and one that would make a good short story complete in itself, is the portion relating Ruth's first venture into the field of Boaz. Riding on her milk-white donkey, she comes to glean among the workers who are singing to the rhythm of their swinging scythes. Her delicate

beauty, in contrast to the sturdy strength of the Hebrew women, attracts the roving eye of Gibbor the Benjamite until the arrival of Boaz prevents trouble and gives Ruth her first assurance of security in her adopted land. If the charm of this brief pastoral episode could have been sustained throughout the book, Fineman's novel might have stood a better chance in its inevitable comparison with the pure beauty of the Book of Ruth.

Not many novelists have had the temerity to attempt an imaginative extension of the Old Testament original, one of the most charming of all prose idyls. Two in the fifties have followed Fineman's Ruth of 1949: Edward Francis Murphy with The Song of the Cave (1950) and Frank Gill Slaughter with The Song of Ruth (1954). Murphy has the story of Ruth related by the Bethlehem shepherds as they watch their sheep on the hillside. At the end of their narrative they follow the star to the Manger, where, in Mary's beauty, they see Ruth of Moab and, in Joseph's devotion, another Boaz. Thus the story-within-the-story is the main plot, which is complicated with cruelty, murder, and intrigue before Naomi and Ruth set out for Bethlehem. There Ruth loves to retire for meditation to an

old cave, where the wind plays music on an eolian harp about its entrance. She and Boaz quickly fall in love, but many fictional events delay the happy ending foretold in the Old Testament. Ruth is accused of being a foreign spy; she is captured by the enemy; after her escape she feels it her duty to retire from the world and devote herself to the Temple service. At last, however, she and Boaz marry, give away all their possessions, and build their home in the cave, where one day, the reader is given to understand, Mary will bring forth the Christ Child. Slaughter's account is less highly imaginative and more pedestrian. His Boaz, like Fineman's reluctant bachelor, finds it hard to admit his love for Ruth; his experience with a faithless wife from Moab blinds his eyes at first to her charms. The central struggle develops between him and Naomi's kinsman, who tries to molest Ruth and, failing, denounces her as a spy and an adulteress. Boaz, however, heroically triumphs over the enemies of Israel, exposes the kinsman's perfidy, and joyfully claims Ruth for his bride. When measured by the two Ruth narratives that have followed his novel, Fineman's work appears to good advantage: less adorned than Murphy's, of more substance than Slaughter's, and better written than either of them.

IV. Van Tassel Sutphen

I, Nathanael, Knew Jesus, 1941

Besides Fineman's Jacob, a second biblical novel appeared in 1941, entitled I, Nathanael, Knew Jesus. Its author, Van Tassel Sutphen, has written the book as if it were an additional gospel, thus establishing in the choice of its gospeler the viewpoint for interpretation of the familiar story. As Sholem Asch, in the "Gospel of Judas," used as narrator one who is in opposition to a spiritual Messiah, so Sutphen selects Nathanael, whom he portrays as a skeptic whose doubts must be painfully overcome before he can see in Jesus of Nazareth the incarnate Son of God.

Following the traditional interpretation, the author assumes that Nathanael is synonymous with Bartholomew, who, as a member of the Twelve, has been an eye witness to most of the events to be narrated. Besides amplifying the materials from his personal recollections, the Apostle is made to refer frequently to gospels already in circulation in order to fill in the gaps of the story, mentioning also at times in a footnote some view not wholly accepted by first-century Christians. The entire gospel is presented as if dictated by Nathanael at the close of his

life, when, pictured as the venerable Bishop of Colosse and the last remaining member of the Twelve, he undertakes at a friend's insistance the writing of his book to record the slow growth of his own faith that he may thereby help other men of his skeptical turn of mind.

Sutphen pictures Nathanael as different from the other Apostles both in his slowness to believe and in his cultural background. Wealthy, highly educated, aristocratic, socially at ease among the elect of Jerusalem, he joined the inner circle about the Galilean with the one sole qualification for discipleship--that he loved Jesus and wanted to be with him. In some manner the author manages to have him, incognito or otherwise, always near the Master at the crucial events of his public ministry. With Judas he watched Jesus baptized in the Jordan, dismissing the claim of heavenly voices as probably the sound of thunder. Drawn irresistibly through love to follow Jesus, he yet scoffed at the report of wine from the water-pots at Cana and sought rational explanation for the apparent miracles of healing. At the Crucifixion he replied coldly to the centurion's wondering confession of faith with the words, "Jesus is dead."[27] In the Upper

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[27] I, Nathanael, Knew Jesus (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1941), p. 318.

Room others beheld the Risen Lord, but spiritual sight was denied to Nathanael until finally, as the unnamed companion of Cleopas on the Emmaus Road, he was made by the author to perceive. The new believer then relates the experience in the language of the Nicene Creed, for, explains Sutphen in his Preface, the affirmations of Christian faith were certainly in the making generations before being recorded in finished literary form. Thus Nathanael describes the Guest who accepted the invitation to abide and sup with him:

> I see Him, I see Him plain. Not alone the Jesus whom I had loved, not alone the Master whom I had followed, but my resurrected, everliving Lord; Begotten of His Father before all worlds; Light of Light, Very God of very God; Who for us men and our salvation came down from heaven; And was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary; And was made man.[28]

To supplement Nathanael's serious presentation of the life and mission of Jesus, Sutphen seeks to enliven the record with the love story of Nathanael and the imaginary Lilli, who is represented as the daughter of Joseph of Arimathea. The subplot is always hovering in the background, although it is never permitted to claim the center stage. After the tragic events of Holy Week have passed,

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[28] Ibid., p. 339.

the author seems ready to have the romance burst into full flower. Lilli steps forward to meet her lover, "her white brow mantling to crimson with the quick confusion in her blood," but the gospeler is made sedately to rebuff further disclosures by saying, "Not even for you, dear reader, can I reopen that door."[29]

Making the guilt of Judas Iscariot a contrast to Nathanael's lesser shortcoming of doubt, Sutphen departs from the usual in picturing Judas as the victim of a terrible affliction called furor epilepticus. Possessed at times as if by demons, he would trample to death a helpless mother bird with her young or laugh at holy things or make an obscene sacrifice to Ashtoreth. After such evil deeds he would fall into a deep sleep, then awake refreshed and clothed in his right mind. Thus the author shows that it was under the influence of this dread malady, which he refused to acknowledge to his friends or to confess to Jesus, that Judas betrayed his Rabbi and consequently hanged himself. Aside from this rather melodramatic note on Judas, however, Sutphen has little fresh interpretation or fictional success in his

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[29] Ibid., p. 341.

imaginary expansion of the Bible story. His generally reverent approach remains unaccompanied by notable literary merit.

Sutphen's book follows the familiar pattern of the "additional gospel" type of story of having the gospeler record, as an old man, his memories of Jesus. Such a narrative is Gladys Malvern's _According to Thomas_ (1947), which will be discussed presently. So also is _Gospel According to Gamaliel_ (1946) by the Englishman Gerald Heard. Heard's novel, unlike most other "gospels," is related by the Jew Gamaliel, who never believes in Jesus as the true Messiah. The author, who shares Asch's purpose of reconciliation between Jew and Christian, lacks Asch's disarming generosity of approach and consequent success. There is, however, a pleasing interpretation of many of the biblical episodes and a dignified lack of romance. Less controversial than Heard's novel, Sutphen's story is at the same time less scholarly, but more apt to call forth a sympathetic response from the average reader.

V. Lloyd C. Douglas

The Robe, 1942

Van Tassel Sutphen, with his one contribution of lesser magnitude, is followed by an author whose many religious novels form a list of the best-sellers of our day. After the large success of Magnificent Obsession, Green Light, and White Banners--all deeply religious in tone--Lloyd Cassel Douglas turned to biblical fiction. However we may seek to account for the immense popularity of The Robe (1942), we must class it with that small group of biblical novels which have joined the ranks of the best-loved books of the American people. Its phenomenal success recalls that of Joseph Holt Ingraham's The Prince of the House of David (1859), Lew Wallace's Ben Hur (1880), and Henrik Sienkiewicz's Quo Vadis (1895). Already, like Ben Hur and Quo Vadis, it has appeared on the screen, its first production introducing and realizing the gigantic proportions of the new cinemascope. Douglas' second biblical novel, The Big Fisherman (1948), is a sequel to The Robe.

Douglas, a Lutheran minister who widened his parish through the medium of fiction, was led some years ago to

write The Robe in answer to the question of Hazel McCann, a department store clerk of Canton, Ohio, concerning the subsequent history of the seamless coat of Jesus, after it was gambled away by the Roman soldiers at the Crucifixion. Unable to give Mrs. McCann a satisfactory answer, Douglas decided to draw upon his imagination. Such a relic of the Saviour, he thought, could have a marvelous history.

He may have had in mind the deep reverence shown to two of the most famous relics of the Roman Catholic Church: the "Holy Coat of Trier," believed by the devout to be the true seamless robe, and the "Holy Shroud of Turin"--the winding sheet that wrapped Jesus' body in the tomb and upon which appears the imprint of his body. Possibly Douglas recalled the significance attached to Jesus' clothing even before his death, when the woman found health simply by touching the hem of his garment. For other biblical inspiration he may have pondered the power that descended upon Elisha when he wore the mantle of his master. Certainly it is the great veneration for objects once connected with the person of a loved one or a famous personage or a saint that has helped to create the wide appeal of The Robe. Thomas Aquinas defined for the Roman Catholic Church the doctrine concerning such matters when he wrote:

> It is clear . . . that he who has a certain affection for anyone, venerates whatever of his is left after death, not only his body and parts thereof, but even external things, such as his clothes and such-like. Now it is manifest that we should show honor to the saints of God, as being members of Christ, and children and friends of God, and our intercessors. Wherefore in memory of them we ought to honor any relics of them in fitting honor . . . Hence God Himself fittingly honors such relics by working miracles at their presence.[30]

Thus Douglas is not simply answering one random question in his novel. He is appealing to an almost universal reverence for an external possession of the Saviour: his coat, the seamless garment worn by him at his Crucifixion.

The author makes the Robe the medium by which those handling it are made to realize in an acute physical sense the nature of Jesus. It is a dynamic relic. The experience of each who handles it is expressive of his inner state and can be excruciating or healing. It is Marcellus' experience with the Robe that shapes the plot. Marcellus Gallio, the Roman soldier in charge of the Crucifixion, wins the coat when lots are cast for it. When he flees from his conscience, the Robe is a scourge; when he opens the door of his heart, it becomes a benediction. Structurally the novel is the story of Marcellus, but the keenest interest of the reader ever concerns the Robe of the Galilean.

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[30] Summa Theol., III, q. 25, art.6.

Douglas pictures Marcellus as a Roman Senator's son, whose honesty and lack of diplomacy result in his assignment as a Centurion to the dangerous fort of Minoa, or Gaza, in Palestine. Shortly after, he is commissioned to conduct the Crucifixion. After the death of Christ, a group of drunken soldiers dare him in derision to put on the dead Galilean's coat, which Marcellus has won by casting lots with the soldiers at the foot of the Cross. The horror of his recent responsibility and this crass discourtesy to the dead unsettle his mind. He develops an unnatural loathing for the Robe and is apt to terminate any conversation with the haunting question, "Were you there?" Douglas then has the turning point of the plot occur when once again Marcellus touches the Robe and feels a comforting sense of well-being and peace, reminding him of something deeper even than a mother's love. The story then takes him back to Rome, to Greece, to Palestine to learn more of the Galilean, and finally to Rome to die as a Christian martyr.

Douglas prepares the ground carefully to heighten the importance of the Robe. After the Roman soldiers thoughtlessly toss dice for possession of it, Demetrius--loyal and intelligent Greek slave of Marcellus--replies

to a remark about the bad luck the garment is sure to bring by saying, "Why bad luck? It belonged to a brave man."[31] But when Marcellus places the coat about his own shoulders in view of the drunken revelers in the banquet hall, his knees buckle and the strength goes out of him. In describing the incident to Senator Gallio later, Demetrius reports:

> He did it--quite unwillingly. He had been very far gone in wine, in the afternoon, but was now steadied. I think he might have recovered from the crucifixion horror if it had not been for the Robe. He put it on--and he has never been the same since![32]

And then to a fellow slave Demetrius is more candid:

> Well--be it foolish or not--when I touch this Robe it--it does something to me. . . . If I am tired, it rests me. If I am dejected, it revives my spirits. If I am rebellious over my slavery, it reconciles me. I suppose that is because--when I handle his Robe--I remember his strength--and courage.[33]

So it comes about that when Douglas has Marcellus bring himself again to touch the Robe, the dark thoughts of suicide vanish, his agitation is stilled, his mind--so

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[31] The Robe (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1942), p. 140.

[32] Ibid., p. 175.

[33] Ibid., p. 180.

long clouded with remorse and guilt--is cleared. It is a tense moment when Caligula almost touches the Robe. Checked more by superstition than godly fear, he withdraws his extended hand as Marcellus, sentenced to death, gives the Robe tenderly into the keeping of his wife Diana. In the closing episode, which recalls the Christians of Quo Vadis singing on their way to the arena, Douglas pictures the gallant Roman and his beautiful wife, who has chosen to join him, marching to their death. Keeping step with the guards, they pause once to toss forth the Robe for Peter, the Big Fisherman.

There is little doubt that Douglas, the minister, has reached a large and responsive public with this moving account of the early Christians who still felt the living presence of their Lord. One feels that The Robe is the author's own "magnificant obsession" to proclaim the gospel story, and that any failure to accomplish this is due to his limitations as a novelist and literary craftsman, not to lack of earnestness of purpose. The 695 pages of the book grow tedious in spite of the author's winning sincerity and the conventional Marcellus-Diana romance that brightens the plot. The effort to set biblical incidents in everyday life often results in unbecoming casualness, as in the case of the lad with the loaves and fishes,

who is described as having "popped up from nowhere--holding out his little basket." Douglas is not gifted like Sholem Asch in the magic art of retelling the scriptural story with spiritual insight, imaginative detail, and verbal felicity. Often his words are flat, failing to convey the intense emotion indicated. At the climax of his account of Jesus and the storm at sea, for instance, Douglas has Bartholomew prosaically conclude: "He [Jesus] held both hands outstretched--and spoke! It was not a shrill shout. It was rather as one might soothe a frightened animal. 'Peace!' he said. 'Peace! Be still!'"[34] In spite, however, of a rambling plot and a noticeable lack of eloquence, Douglas has preached in popular fashion to an uncritical American public, which has welcomed his message in its favorite form of literature, fiction.

The phenomenal popularity of Ben Hur, Quo Vadis, and The Robe cannot be glibly explained. Certain points of similarity suggest their wide appeal. All three are painted on a broad canvas, well suited to the cinemascope. The color and pageantry of the Roman world impart a glamor to our workaday world. In comfortable safety, we thrill with horror as the lions eat the Christians before the

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[34] Ibid., p. 419.

cheering throngs of Rome. But there is more than this. Underneath the melodrama, Wallace and Sienkiewicz and Douglas have portrayed the beauty of Christianity at its source. They have pushed aside the accouterments of the centuries that obscure the purity of Christian brotherhood so that the reader feels as clean as Ben Hur's leprous mother and sister at the touch of Christ, as consecrated as the singing Christians of Quo Vadis who march to the arena, as comforted as Marcellus wrapped in the Lord's own Robe. With their limitations of style and structure, these books cannot be rated with the great literary classics. The general reading public, undeterred by pronouncements of the critics, prolongs their popularity, pleased with the gorgeous spectacle of the ancient world, more deeply moved by the triumph of the spirit of man.

The Big Fisherman, 1948

When Marcellus and Diana threw the Robe to Simon Peter in the closing scene of The Robe, the reader presumed that a sequel would be forthcoming, and Lloyd Douglas fulfilled the tacit assumption with publication

in 1948 of The Big Fisherman. With the largest advance sale of any novel ever published, it has nevertheless disappointed many readers, as sequels often do.

The plot is divided in interest between Peter's discipleship and the romance of an Arabian princess. Although Peter is ostensibly indicated as the protagonist in the title, the novel is largely an adventure story concerning Princess Fara, fictional child of the unhappy historical marriage of Herod Antipas to the daughter of King Aretas of Arabia. Douglas skillfully blends fact and invention in his account of this historically sound alliance, which was planned to withstand Roman might and resulted in the threat of war between Jews and Arabians when Antipas divorced his Arabian wife to marry Herodias. The author is inclined to prefer Arabian over Jewish culture in his picture of the fiercely independent and turbulent Arabian descendants of Ishmael, whose rulers willingly renounce personal happiness for the good of the state and passionately vow to avenge Herod's dishonor to their royal house. Interest lags, however, as the scene shifts back and forth between Arabia and Galilee to follow the romance of Princess Fara and Voldi, her gallant Arabian lover. Several times happiness is within their reach, to be finally renounced by Fara, whose superior

sense of duty makes their union impossible. When word comes of Voldi's accession to the Arabian throne, Douglas has Fara abandon all thought of marriage because of her realization that a queen half Arabian and half Jewish will never be acceptable to the proud sons of Ishmael.

It is during Fara's sojourn in Galilee, where she is befriended by Peter's wife's mother, that the author belatedly introduces the Big Fisherman, who is to become the foremost of the disciples of Jesus. Already a widower, this sacrilegious and belligerent fisherman is described as "the huge, noisy, quick-tempered, lamentably irreverent son of Jonas." Possessed of a passionate love of his race, this courageous, big-hearted Jew is drawn inevitably to the Galilean Rabbi. We watch him grow from the rough and burly fisherman into the august, majestic leader of the early Christian Church. Fearless and filled with power after the resurrection of Jesus, he rallies the Christians and marches forward without regret to meet a martyr's death.

There is much adornment of the simple gospel story. Douglas has a heavenly messenger appear on several occasions. The angel helps to remove the Lord's body from the

Cross; later he returns, in vision, to summon each one who will be present at Pentecost. It is he, moreover, who speaks to Peter on the housetop about his mission to the gentiles. It is not enough for Peter to go about doing the work of the New Testament record; he must also go into Arabia to heal the crown prince of infantile paralysis!

Douglas' warmth of heart and sincere desire to convey a message are not furthered by his pedestrian style and his effort at a jaunty, modern tone. It is incongruous to hear the beloved disciple called "Johnny" and Joseph of Arimathea referred to as "Joe." The scene will suffice wherein Joseph requests permission to lay the body of Jesus in his own new tomb.

"Well, Joe," muttered the unhappy Procurator, gruffly, "what is it?"

"I want permission, sire, to bury the Galilean--when he is dead."

"Friend of yours, Joe?"

Joe nodded, slowly.

"At a distance, sire," he said. "I was not a follower. I did not have the courage. But--I want to put him away--in my tomb."[35]

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[35]The Big Fisherman (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1948), pp. 489-490.

Throughout the narrative the colloquial tone, in spite of the reverential "sires," is incommensurate with the loftiness of theme. More than The Robe, The Big Fisherman lacks literary distinction.

Almost every novel about New Testament times introduces Peter in some fashion. Gladys Malvern's According to Thomas (1947), for instance, pictures him as a successful fisherman, as does Douglas. Here he is the owner of many boats and commands a large crew of fishermen. In his late thirties, he is a short, thickset man with "small, twinkly" eyes. As usual, he is impulsive and talkative. In Road from Olivet (1946) by Edward Francis Murphy, Peter is introduced in Rome as a patriarchal figure, whom Mary Magdalene waits on as did Mary of Bethany on Jesus. Both are already saints of the early Christian community in Rome; to Peter, Mary's spirit is a shrine. Unlike Douglas' Peter, he dreams of the seven hills of Rome as the future center of the Church in a troubled world. In Asch's The Apostle, Peter, fixed in the Law, opposes Paul's inclusion of the gentiles without the rite of circumcision. After deep thought and much probing of conscience, he experiences the vision which reveals to him that no man in God's sight is born unholy

or unclean. In Rome he preaches from prison, "filled with joy and adoration of God as a grape is filled with wine." He spends his days praying and preaching and recounting to Mark the words and deeds of the Messiah. He is not in accord with all of Paul's mystical doctrine, but the two men do not quarrel. Douglas has Peter go alone to meet his death. In The Apostle he and Paul go forth together, the two names "intertwined in a single cord of salvation."

VI. Manuel Komroff

In the Years of Our Lord, 1942

Like Lloyd Douglas, who was first a minister, and Irving Fineman, who was first an engineer, Manuel Komroff became a novelist after experimenting in other fields. He studied engineering, music, and painting before settling down to a literary career. He has been war correspondent, publisher, literary critic, editor, and novelist; he has written musical scores for motion pictures and reviewed cinematic productions. Some of this varied background plays a part in his creative writing. For his historical novels he made exhaustive research. Two are biblical:

Two Thieves (1931), a fictitious narrative of the two malefactors crucified with Jesus, and In the Years of Our Lord (1942), a retelling of the life of Jesus from birth to death.

Komroff tells the story of Jesus in a series of separate incidents, many of them complete in themselves as short narratives. He weaves into this episodic presentation complicated and theatrical additions which suggest his Hollywood experiences. He uses a mechanical framework involving "the oracle Xado" to begin and end the story, and introduces an imaginary Jewish merchant called Ben Shaba to supply partial unity to the events of Jesus' life. Ben Shaba, his wife, and his children--Mary, Martha, and Lazarus--are made to share this responsibility as they become participants in the New Testament narrative.

Komroff creates Xado to direct the Magi to Bethlehem. Once he had been the slave boy of Cleopatra; in his old age he reads the stars. After the Wise Men return to report to him their success in finding the Infant King, the author then for much of the book makes no further use of "the oracle." The direct narrative ends shortly after the Crucifixion. The final chapter of the book returns to Xado to bring the story to its conclusion. Out of the East

he comes to look upon the busy streets of Jerusalem. Pilate hears of the arrival of the famous seer and sends to question him as to the future. Xado then reveals to Pilate the tragic blindness of condemning a King to death, and prophesies the final triumph of Christ over the seemingly invincible might of Rome. "Because of him," Xado warns Pilate, "your name will be immortal."[36]

The author's most notable addition is Ben Shaba and his family. Ben Shaba meets the Magi on their way home from Bethlehem. Later, traveling with his caravan eastward, he encounters and befriends Joseph and Mary as they flee with Jesus from Herod's wrath. Ben Shaba journeys with them to Egypt and there helps them establish a temporary abode. Several years afterward he moves to Nazareth, where he rears his children and renews ties of friendship with Joseph's family. Because of the merchant's immense wealth, his interests reach beyond the little town to the inner circles of Jerusalem. His wife's friendship with Herodias and his son's with Pontius Pilate make it possible for some member of his family to witness most of the important happenings during Jesus' last days. The

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[36] In the Years of Our Lord (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1942), p. 299.

author pictures Lazarus as the owner of fine Arabian race horses. In a true Ben Hur chariot race, the young man loses his life in theatrical fanfare and is then resurrected from the dead by Jesus, after the biblical record.

The most vivid personage in the entire book is Sarah, who becomes Ben Shaba's wife. She first appears as the merry slave awaiting purchase in the market place of ancient Alexandria. Fabulously beautiful, she is known for her vile temper, her serpent's tongue, and the clever tricks with which she torments her master. She gives away the ribbons and bracelets with which she is adorned and she splashes mud on her expensive gowns, but she is clever enough to escape punishment. All of her misconduct, she explains before the judge, is caused by a flaw in her nature that makes hatred grow up within her so that she is compelled to injure and deceive. Ben Shaba sees through her ruse; he buys her, frees her, and marries her. She is then relegated to a minor role for the rest of the book. We are told that she becomes a sedate Jewish matron, but the author does not show us this development. Sarah, the merry slave, is not a vital part of the plot. Too charming to be introduced and laid aside, she has the proper qualifications for a heroine of a thrilling adventure story like

Thomas Costain's The Black Rose.

In the separate episodes of Jesus' life Komroff gives freshness to much of the biblical material with an artistic expression not found in the handling of his purely fictional additions. He offers a singularly moving version of the healing of the ten lepers as Jesus wins their love and confidence before dispelling their disease. A well-told incident involving Jesus and a prodigal son foreshadows the greatest of all his parables. The chapter entitled "Alone the Stranger Passes" is a symbolic story of a blind beggar who follows in the shadow of Jesus through the streets of the city. The two walk in silence, unnoticed by the crowds in Jerusalem; twelve times, in as many minutes, Jesus' shadow changes the course of human events as the people near him are enabled to conquer their besetting sins. The author gives a new version of the temptation in the wilderness. It is not a solitary experience, since people come and go as Jesus searches for the true Son of God, only to realize at last his own divine nature. During this experience a dying robber sees the light of heaven play about the head of this Seeker and understands who he is. Jesus rescues a wandering caravan about to perish in the

desert. And meanwhile there comes from the darkness of the cave the rasping voice of a hermit tempting him to use heavenly powers for selfish aggrandizement, to bow before enthroned evil and become the master of the world.

In working out his plot, Komroff has leaned heavily upon the long arm of coincidence. He used exact timing in Ben Shaba's adventures to have him meet the Magi on their return trip from Bethlehem and then encounter the Holy Family fleeing to Egypt. He created a marvelous history for the jar of precious ointment presented by the Wise Men at Jesus' birth. He has it passed through many hands as it is carried over the world and back, for one reason or another, to be broken at last by Mary, daughter of Ben Shaba, to anoint the feet of her Master. It is all made to appear feasible, but the long chain of circumstances is joined in a most remarkable manner. The author's use of "the oracle Xado" becomes a mechanical device apart from the exigencies of plot; his imaginary characters seem conventional and decorative rather than functional. Komroff's real ability as a storyteller appears, not in the fictional additions, but in the individual episodes of the life of Jesus.

The author's choice of the episodic presentation of the life of Jesus is one of many approaches that have

been employed in the narration of the gospel story. Sholem Asch, in The Nazarene, places the ministry of Jesus within the framework of the Wandering Jew legend and has the gospel story retold numerous times; Frank Stuart, in Caravan for China, keeps Jesus in the background of an adventure plot. J. M. Hartley pictures him as the twenty-year-old carpenter in his novel called The Way; Gerald Heard, in The Gospel According to Gamaliel, makes Jesus wholly human but the greatest of the prophets. In contrast to Komroff's emphasis on symbolism, LeGette Blythe, in Bold Galilean, stresses an objective portrayal. John Brett calls his novel The Innovator because of the opposition of the Sanhedrin to this Rabbi who threatens to disturb their lucrative monopoly of the Temple trade. In Jacob Randolph Perkins' The Emperor's Physician, Jesus is primarily the healer; in The Brother by Dorothy Clarke Wilson, he is the older brother of James. Thus each author of a New Testament novel decides first whether to present Jesus directly or through his influence upon other characters, whether biblical or fictional. If the direct method is selected, then some particular approach is determined.

VII. J. M. Hartley

The Way, 1944

As it has been mentioned above, J. M. Hartley's narrative of Jesus, called The Way (1944), is a unique presentation of the twenty-year-old Carpenter before he enters upon his public ministry. Jesus himself appears only briefly in the book, which centers about the search of the Magi: their second search. Years ago they had found the new-born Babe in Bethlehem; now they come again to Palestine looking for the King. Here they become involved with two characters invented by the author: the Roman soldier Severus and Leah, his Jewish companion, whose love affair enlivens the plot and lends immediacy to the quest for Jesus.

Hartley uses the traditional names for the Magi: Caspar, Melchior, and Balthasar. He has them come from different lands and represent different religions of great power in the time of Christ. Balthasar, the Egyptian, is the high priest of Isis; Caspar of Persia is a learned physician, who worships Mithra; Melchior, from India, is a Buddhist. The author's really novel contribution to the narrative is the precise motive for the

second search for Jesus. The Wise Men are indeed searching for the King; but it is as the distinguished officials of a world-wide secret brotherhood that they now look for the Child of the Bethlehem Star, to train him for leadership in their fraternity. The symbols of this organization, older than Solomon's temple, are the carpenter's square, the compass, and the mallet. Presumably, the Masonic Order is indicated. Only to one who is worthy the honor must they bequeath their wisdom; only the divine leading will enable them to recognize him. The plot ends with the fulfillment of their mission.

Hartley introduces the Centurion Severus to represent the Roman Empire of Jesus' day. When Balthasar makes inquiry in Rome about Jesus, Caesar, ever on the watch for revolutionary elements in the Empire, dispatches Severus to accompany Balthasar to Palestine to report any possible subversive activity. Severus then takes literally the Emperor's advice to learn the language of the Jews and to choose a Jewish mistress. He frequents a small tavern in Damascus, where he makes love to Leah, the serving maid. She then assists him in spying upon the Wise Men, who have made this inn their headquarters. Convinced that their purpose is seditious, Severus sends report to Caesar, only to have his letter censored by the Roman Legate for Syria,

who resents initiative in officers serving under his authority. The Legate orders Severus at once into posts of danger and is glad in the end to demote him for the bungled termination of his affair with the Jewess.

In spite of the casual manner of their relationship, Leah loves Severus deeply and resolves to follow him on to his new assignment in Jerusalem in order to be near him when their child will be born. On the way she visits in Nazareth with family friends--Joseph, Mary, and Jesus--who with hundreds of other Jews are planning to celebrate the Passover in the Holy City. Severus, tired of Leah, is displeased to find that she has followed him. When certain Pharisees in the Passover pilgrimage discover Leah's condition and vow to stone her for an adulteress, she flees to the Wise Men for protection. They disguise her as a leper and care for her secretly; Caspar, the physician, plans to deliver her child. Their benevolence, however, fails to prevent the Jews from locating their quarry and stoning Leah to death. The Magi find her after she has been left to die, with her last breath she directs them to Jesus:

"Yesus [Jesus] is the one you have been seeking."

Beseechingly she looked into Melchior's eyes, as if to assure herself that he understood. He gazed back at her comprehendingly, then stood up and put his hand upon Yesus' shoulder.

"This lad," he exclaimed. "Yes. We have found him at last."[37]

The author has made all of the main characters--Wise Men, Severus, and Leah--to participate in the search for the Child of the Star. Before Leah finally points him out to the Magi, they have been discouraged over their apparently fruitless quest. Caspar cries out in despair: "Our learning, our treasured secrets of the mind, to whom shall we pass them on for safekeeping? Where, oh, where is the youth whose great soul will stand out white among the shadows?"[38] Severus first guesses the truth and is frustrated to realize that, against his will, he has been aiding the Magi.

For if he had not made Leah his concubine, she would not have traveled southward from Damascus and joined the carpenter and his family in Nazareth, nor later, here in Jerusalem, brought Yesus and Yusuf to the attention of the three Wise Men. . . . He had been their blind tool. . . .

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[37]The Way (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1944), pp. 179-180.

[38]Ibid., p. 129.

Could some higher power be using them and him and myriads of other men for fulfillment of a great plan?[39]

Almost the Roman finds peace when Jesus comes to share his grief over Leah's cruel death. When Leah identifies Jesus, Caspar questions her judgment. "A simple, guileless lad," he agrees, "but of the earth, earthy, a mere artisan, whereas the one we seek must have kingly qualities, must have the mind and manner of a leader."[40] Only the holy Melchior recognizes in the Carpenter of Nazareth the greatness of Messiah.

In avoiding the conventional groove, Hartley has decorated the biblical scene almost past recognition. To bring the Magi back to Palestine as representatives of the Masonic Order--noble as it assuredly is--seems an anti-climax after their first visit to him as the Saviour of the world. The sordid Severus-Leah love affair was probably typical enough when the Jews were under Roman domination; the compassion of the twenty-year-old Jesus knew no barriers of race or class or creed. This portrayal of Jesus is the author's most artistic accomplishment. Presented as a minor character throughout the narrative and as one who has not yet reached his maturity, Jesus is at the same time the object of the great quest. Every time he appears, his personality is quietly compelling. Peace

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[39] Ibid., p. 169.

[40] Ibid., p. 173.

and healing emanate from him to suffering humanity as he serenely waits for God's sign.

Hartley's story of the Magi recalls Komroff's In the Years of Our Lord and Henry Van Dyke's The Other Wise Man. All three novelists use the traditional names for the eastern kings, although their biblical designation is only "wise men from the east." Van Dyke's narrative actually has little to do with the Magi who followed the star to Bethlehem but relates the journeys of the "Other Wise Man," called Artaban, who missed his friends at the appointed hour because he tarried to show mercy to a dying stranger. It is his continuing search through life to behold the face of his King that resembles the adventure of the Magis of The Way. Komroff, on the other hand, introduces the eastern kings in his first episode of In the Years of Our Lord. They go to Bethlehem and report their success to "the oracle Xado," thereafter to disappear as completely as they do from Saint Matthew's gospel when they outwit Herod and "depart into their own country another way." In all three novels the Wise Men are seekers for the heaven-sent King. In symbolic beauty they issue from the East; from realms of mystery the spirit of man comes, seeking God.

VIII. Edward Frances Murphy

The Scarlet Lily, 1944

The year of 1944 proved a fruitful one for biblical novels. Three other writers joined Hartley in their offerings for the press: Edward Francis Murphy with The Scarlet Lily, Jacob Randolph Perkins with The Emperor's Physician, and Dorothy Clarke Wilson with The Brother. Of these, both Murphy and Mrs. Wilson have several scriptural narratives to their credit. Murphy, dean of the department of philosophy and religion at Xavier University in New Orleans, has written two novels during the forties about Mary Magdalene: The Scarlet Lily (1944), which is a fictionized biography based on the biblical record, and Road from Olivet (1946), an imaginary life of the Magdalene after the Resurrection of Jesus.

The Scarlet Lily is the story of the initial tragedy that turns the Magdalene to sin, the period of her unhappy, sordid life, her redemption through the Nazarene, and her consequent growth as a Christian. Murphy explains in his Foreword that he has not written with intent to please the scripturalists; his novel is for those who "are

ready to sense in Mary of Magdala a type of our own modern world--fallen from grace, groping in darkness, and at last finding the light, white with death and ruby with sacrifice, at the feet of the Lover supreme."

The first chapter, taken alone, would make a beautiful Christmas story, ending on a note of sadness which nevertheless reverberates with overtones of victory. Murphy pictures the night of Jesus' birth from the viewpoint of Herod, who sees in a vision, as did Dickens' Scrooge, the awful procession of the souls he has wronged. His eerie accusers taunt him with his hollow glory until Mariamne, the wife he has murdered, steps forth to point out the star that is shining above to announce the coming of a King who will need no sword to maintain his rule. The author then depicts Herod's frenzied efforts to prevent the inevitable, resulting in the destruction of the infants and the death of the first Christian martyr, who gives his life gladly that the Kingdom may come.

Murphy uses the account of Herod's night as a prelude to Mary Magdalene's story. He represents her as present at the carnage. He has her witness the cruel death of her mother and baby brother, after which she is consumed

with bitter hatred for all who have caused her sorrow.

> Still a child, the girl had become, in a single night, a woman; yet one without a woman's trust and faith; one without love and with an abiding hate. Hate for Herod, who, like a great foul spider in his palace, had spun out this excess of crime; hate for his soldiers, so pliant to his diabolic will, and hate, most of all, for that child in Bethlehem whose birth was the immediate cause, however innocent, of the loss of her loved ones. . .[41]

The author then has her deliberately choose a life of prostitution, for, she grimly argues, where is purity in Herod's realm?

The action of the story is based on Mary's inner struggle wherein love and hate contend for the mastery. Through a series of incidents this conflict is portrayed. She overhears the Child Jesus talking in the Temple; almost she believes that goodness and reverence can exist. Again, she sees from afar the beauty of Jesus' home in Nazareth, but because the boy in that home has indirectly caused death in her family, in revenge she later incites Herodias to demand the head of John the Baptist, Jesus' forerunner, at the fateful banquet. At length, stealing out into the night with the resolve to murder Jesus himself, she witnesses his wilderness temptation, is overcome by the stench of the unholy Creature from the dark

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[41] The Scarlet Lily (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1944), p. 38.

regions, and is revived by the Presence, whose blessing lingers with her. She then ventures forth to hear the Nazarene preach at the synagogue in his home town, but she departs with the weight of sin still upon her soul. It is not until Jesus sends her to his mother for comfort that the Magdalene's heart is eased of its burden in the assurance that her baby brother is "playing mid the stars" as one of the "first flowerets of a new kingdom." Mother Mary then gives her a rose plucked from a leafless bush, an everlasting rose "with dew asparkle on its satin petal," a symbol of heavenly redemption.

In the latter part of the novel Murphy has his heroine a radiant Christian walking the path to sainthood. He pictures her in the biblical scenes ordinarily associated with Mary of Magdala. She is present in Simon's house to wash the feet of Jesus with her tears. She is identified as the woman taken in adultery, who, when commanded by Jesus to lift her veil, reveals a face (as in Asch's account of the incident) from which the fleshly charms have been erased by penitence. The author has her share Judas' eagerness for Jesus to enter into his earthly glory. Mary uses her former lover's gift of precious ointment to anoint the Nazarene for death, resisting the temptation to bargain unworthily to save his life.

In Murphy's reverent handling of the Immaculate Mother Mary, he reflects the devotional style of much of the so-called Mary literature. He uses much of the traditional symbolism. His title incorporates a contrast between the two Marys. Mother Mary is a white lily. In her utter purity she speaks in tones of celestial sweetness, her face "luminous as a star released from a cloud and as trustful and loving as a little child's."[42] Separated from the mother of Jesus by years of shameful living, the Magdalene begins to share her radiance. Together in agony the two women watch the Crucifixion until the author has the horror melt into the final symbolism of the book: "The two lilies--the one white, the other scarlet; the one straight in the sun, the other bending its head but curling its petals upward--reared their beauty in the wake of his glory. A pledge of undying spring."[43]

Road from Olivet, 1946

Road from Olivet is a sequel to The Scarlet Lily. For this Murphy draws entirely on his imagination to place

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[42] Ibid., p. 107.

[43] Ibid., p. 239.

Mary of Magdala in Rome before the arrival there of Peter and Paul. In his Foreword he mentions the tradition which indicates her evangelization of France. If that be true, he infers, "is it not probable that, in route to the West, she sought and won souls in Italy also?" Frankly admitting that he builds his fiction on "a few Scriptural and historical connotations," he emphasizes the importance of Jesus' command to carry the gospel to the ends of the earth, which "must have been of the first importance to the Magdalene, whose abounding love necessarily treasured and brooded over his every word."

Although he does not herald it as such, Murphy has actually made of Road from Olivet a true medieval saint's legend. Instead of writing it to conform to the standards of the modern novel, he has produced an almost perfect example of the type of legend so popular in medieval literature. All the earmarks of the genre are present. There are miracles and tortures in abundance. There is the beautiful heroine who, unlike the ladies of the romances, is not interested in courtly love or the things of this world. She is fervent and devout and altogether courageous in converting pagans to Christianity, and often she is

exceedingly bold in her address to wrongdoers. She ministers to the lowly and is rewarded by visions of heavenly glory. Extravagant in word and deed, the narrative may, like the earlier saints' legends, evoke a feeling of irritation and possible ridicule in an unsympathetic reader or one who is not versed in this type of medieval religious literature.

After the Crucifixion Murphy pictures Mary wholly consecrated to the service of heaven. During the unrest produced by the Resurrection stories of the early Christians, the author has Pilate banish Mary and her first convert, the Roman Tullus, to Rome. At once Mary sees in this decree the hand of God guiding her to fulfill the command to go into all the world and preach; but Tullus, who never can fully grasp why he and Mary should not marry, feels a rush of human elation in knowing that they are not to be separated. Thus the fundamental conflict of the plot becomes apparent: Mary, the embodiment of heavenly devotion, seeks to hold Tullus, who typifies all erring humanity, to her standard of selfless abnegation.

Mary is piety incarnate, divine approval having been manifested upon her by the miraculous change of her colored robe to purest white: "white as the garment of

Mother Mary! White as grace." Faced with paganism in any form, she has the strength of granite. Before Pilate's effort to reclaim Tullus for Rome, she stands her ground. "Wild boars could not have moved her. With a gaze as disdainful as that of Herodias, she faced the condemner of her Lord."[44] When Tullus looks back in longing toward the gay life of the empire, she cries steadfastly, "Look up--up!" On the voyage to Rome she ministers to the slaves in the hold of the ship; she converts the captain; she is delivered from the embraces of a drunken sailor; she is saved from a horrible death when accused of witchcraft. Bella domina nulla (Beautiful Lady Nobody) she is called as she cares for Rome's poor. She is the domina in albis (Lady in White) she sheds blessings wherever she goes. Her saintly authority never fails to command obedience.

Following the pattern of the saints' legends, Murphy gives Mary the heavenly fortitude to close her heart to all thought of earthly marriage as she dedicates herself to Christ alone. Frequent mention is made of her

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[44]Road from Olivet (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1946), p. 68.

wearing the veil and of her growing likeness to Mother Mary, the immaculate, the sinless. Kneeling with two other chosen women, Mary has her hair shorn "in symbolism of the sacrifice of self that each heart was making." Then Peter "placed on the heads of the three sisters the flammea which Felix [his assistant] held in readiness on his right arm. Long nuptial veils--not of bright yellow, which was the customary hue in a Roman wedding ceremony, but of a pure white."[45] The great apostle, the Vicar of Rome, establishes the Church, and, while the city burns, Mary's prayers are "as javelins flung against legions to guard the Vatican--the future--from the onrush of ruin."[46]

In allowing the ritual and beliefs of the Roman Catholic Church to permeate his narrative, Murphy has achieved a less universal appeal than another ardent Catholic novelist, Zofia Kossak-Szczucka. In her story of Abraham, called The Covenant, the reader is moved by her faith and spiritual discernment without knowing whether she is Catholic or Protestant. It may be, however, that Murphy's interpretation is especially fitting

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[45] Ibid., p. 269.

[46] Ibid., p. 290.

for the medieval tone of his story; for, instead of pronouncing Read from Olivet an extravaganza of uncontrolled imagination as several reviewers have done, a reader acquainted with literary genres will find in this novel a singularly successful saint's legend. Instead of calling the characters stiff and unnatural, their speech too stilted to communicate warm human emotion, he will recognize the familiar figures of the legends, stylized in a modern version of the Legenda Aurea. What could be a more appropriate subtitle for Murphy's second novel about Mary than "A Modern Legend of Saint Mary Magdalene"?

It has already been observed that Sallie Lee Bell's treatment of the Magdalene in Until the Day Break is concerned more with plot embroidery than character development. There is little of interest to add to the character of the heroine. The Scotch novelist Victor MacClure, on the other hand, gives, in A Certain Woman, an unusual interpretation of a younger Mary: a brilliant, spirited girl whose mind has been carefully trained by her cultured father. Schooled by him in Jewish scholarship and the Greek classics, she shares a large measure of his tolerance and charity, and finds it increasingly irksome to submit to the petty restrictions of Jewish Law. When she is judged

heretical by her townspeople and wanton by her exacting sister, Martha, she turns in desperation to a Roman soldier, whom she marries according to honorable Roman rites. After he forsakes her, she becomes a successful business woman; it is the religious bigots and the rival merchants who condemn her without cause. Her bitterness gives way to happiness through contact with Jesus, and, like Murphy's saint, she devotes herself to holy living. Frank Slaughter's Mary of The Galileans is a singer and an exquisite dancer. She is called the Living Flame as she dances like "a spinning torch" with her coppery gold hair loosened about her shoulders. In the extremely complicated plot, she is more of an individual than Mrs. Lee's Mary of an equally melodramatic story. After harrowing twists and turns of fortune she does not renounce the world as do her counterparts in the hands of Asch, Murphy, and MacClure, but marries the hero. Asch's Magdalene of The Nazarene is also a lovely dancer. She is the toast of sophisticated society life in Jerusalem and sells her favors to the mighty of the land. A strange religious passion possesses this beautiful courtesan; she often retires to her flower garden on the Mount of Olives, where she makes rare perfumes and unguents. Like MacClure's

Mary, she is the sister of Martha and Lazarus; as in Murphy's The Scarlet Lily, she is the woman taken in adultery and made whole again by Jesus. In almost every New Testament novel the Magdalene plays a minor part at least. The range of interpretation is as wide as is indicated by the examples given here.

IX. Jacob Randolph Perkins

The Emperor's Physician, 1944

The third biblical novel of 1944, Jacob Randolph Perkins' The Emperor's Physician, was written by a Congregational minister. Unlike Lloyd Douglas, Perkins has not forsaken his pulpit to preach to a wider reading audience. He does, however, offer a reverent retelling of the gospel story from the viewpoint of Saint Luke, beloved physician of the New Testament. He bases his narrative upon the mission of two doctors, Luke and an imaginary Roman named Sergius Cumanus, sent by the Roman government into Palestine to investigate general conditions of public health and hygiene. He uses Luke as the narrator, although Cumanus, personal physician to the Roman Emperor, is in charge of the investigation. It is inevitable that their efforts should

coincide and be compared with the contemporary acts of healing by Jesus of Nazareth. At once the central conflict arises in the meeting of the three doctors: the scientific materialist, Sergius Cumanus; the natural mystic, Luke; the divine healer, Jesus. All three men are devoted to the service of mankind. Sergius believes in scientific reality and no other; Luke practices medicine according to the best scientific training of his day but is aware of the possibilities of spiritual powers beyond his control; Jesus has the key to forces unknown to man. One question confronts the imperial envoys: is this Nazarene a fakir or a divine physician of body and soul? Everything in the story moves toward the answer to this question, which the Emperor's physician discovers when, wounded and dying, he himself is healed by the Galilean.

The three healers come upon a scene of wretched humanity. Pilate has warned the visiting doctors that the diseased and the outcast are everywhere, even in his own province. In Galilee and Perea, he tells them, lepers and outcasts and lunatics constitute one-fourth of the entire population. Luke writes of his advance along the Sea of Galilee where the country grows constantly wilder with increasing numbers of filthy and haggard creatures, crying

from every hilltop, "Unclean, unclean." He calls it a land of lepers and lunatics, of the blind and the lame, where there are none to pity. In the Gerasene district he describes even worse conditions:

> We saw, literally, the living among the dead: lunatics who dwelt in the tombs, and many of these sepulchers were foul with odors. Some of the wretched creatures, on seeing us, crept back into the deeper darkness of these burying places that were nothing more than holes dug into the cliffs; sometimes they darted from them and, in ragged bands, ran away screaming at the top of their voices. We knew that neither the civil nor the religious authorities of the land cared for these benighted creatures who had been herded into the almost inaccessible hills and left to perish. There were scores of them, both men and women, and there were children--demented offspring of the demented; but why they lived and how they lived was beyond us.[47]

Sergius Cumanus reflects the scientific attitude toward the reports of Jesus' miracles of healing. Skeptical of any show of charlantry, he takes occasion to examine professionally various ailing persons before and after they have been "healed" by Jesus. At first he believes the Galilean to be a clever opportunist; then he begins to look with grudging respect and awe upon this Rabbi with his

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[47] The Emperor's Physician (Garden City, New York: The Sun Dial Press, 1946), pp. 116-117. (The first edition was printed in 1944.)

"matchless blend of eternity and time--a blending in which neither the brevity of the one nor the timelessness of the other could baffle him or cause him to be afraid."[48] As Sergius begins to grasp the truth, he speaks thoughtfully to Luke:

> I am not blind to the rare personality and exceeding charm of Jesus of Nazareth. . . . He has probed human nature to its depths, which, within itself, is miraculous. Perhaps his very presence is healing. My father, during his long practice, possessed a measure of this power. I do not. What a physician the Galilean would have made if he had studied in the Hippocratic school and gained the sciences![49]

Thus the Emperor's physician advances from doubt in Jesus to respect, and finally to complete faith.

The conflict is made dramatic as characters of the main plot suffer from dire illness and are healed by the Nazarene. The child of the Governor of Syria is a leper; the lunatic called Legion is a source of immediate concern; Mary Magdalene, possessed of seven demons, is the red-haired dancer whose love affair with Sergius Cumanus constitutes the romance of the narrative. These and many others find healing at the hands of Jesus--healing and newness of life.

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[48] Ibid., p. 57.

[49] Ibid., p. 184.

Perkins' slender volume of less than 250 pages gives a remarkably clear picture of physical and social conditions in Palestine in New Testament times. In Luke and Sergius' association with Roman officials, they come to understand also the political turmoil and the despair of a conquered people. As the author portrays the radiance of Jesus, triumphant over disease and squalor and meanness and death, he realizes for many readers his hope to present in The Emperor's Physician "a therapy for a war-weary world."

During the fifties Frank G. Slaughter has published two other gospel narratives from the viewpoint of doctors: The Road to Bithynia (1951) and its sequel, The Galileans (1953). In both books the reader's interest is immediate in the medical science of the ancient world and in the doctors, dedicated then as now, to the alleviation of human suffering. Slaughter, a specialist certified by the American Board of Surgery and a member of the American Medical Association and the American College of Surgeons, sounds an even clearer note of authority than does Perkins in his handling of the medical lore and practice in the New Testament period. Like Perkins, he uses Saint Luke as a leading character in his first biblical novel, The

Road to Bithynia. He has the young doctor start out to learn the Galilean's secret of peace in a tempestuous world, and pictures Luke--beyond the plot limits of Perkins' book--writing his gospel and accompanying Paul on his missionary journeys. Perkins makes his medical appeal authentic through the dignified, professional manner of the doctors, their excellence in diagnosis, their opposition to superstition, and their sane, practical reliance on sanitary and therapeutic measures. Slaughter describes with masterly accuracy individual cases. He pictures Luke's improvised surgery in the Roman camp and his daring performance of a Caesarian operation. He introduces the reader to the rites practiced at the Temple of Asklepios in Pergamum when Luke himself in a high mask impersonates the god of healing. In The Galileans he describes the curious treatment by leeches common to the day and the Indian doctor's use of hypnotism in surgery; he relates in detail how the young Jewish doctor-hero, called Joseph, sets Peter's broken arm and removes an old man's cataract. Both Slaughter and Perkins base their appeal upon the medical background and their insight into a doctor's world; both desire earnestly to give a strong and gracious picture of the Great Physician.

X. Dorothy Clarke Wilson

The Brother, 1944

The fourth biblical novel of 1944 is one of three such narratives from the pen of Dorothy Clarke Wilson: The Brother (1944), a fictional interpretation of James, the brother of Jesus; The Herdsman (1946), the life of the prophet Amos; and Prince of Egypt (1949), a story of the young manhood of Moses. Child of a Baptist parsonage and wife of a Methodist minister, she has naturally been interested in religion. Her urge to write began when she was ten. She has published many religious plays but now devotes her time to biblical fiction.

Mrs. Wilson is the first novelist to feature James in the role of hero. As the title The Brother suggests, she portrays James against his family background, especially in relation to Jesus, his brother. In fact the title could refer to either James or Jesus. The story begins with their childhood and closes soon after the Crucifixion. In it the author pictures the transformation of James, who, unworthy of membership in the Twelve, becomes later the head of the Christian Church in Jerusalem. The plot embodies this development.

The author's picture of six-year-old James reveals in the child the dominant traits of character that will determine the major conflict of the novel. He is a serious boy, often impatient with the younger children in the family. Already devoted to the prescribed ritual of the Jewish religion, he is a potential defender of the faith. In the temporary absence of his parents and Jesus, he instantly assumes command as eldest male in the household and arranges for the customary observance of the Sabbath. The incident is typical of his reverence for the Jewish Law; at the same time he feels deep loyalty to his Brother, whose spiritual understanding often supersedes the Law. In their youthful days at home Jesus often speaks to James of the Dream, or the Kingdom, which they must one day bring about on earth. Which will claim James' supreme devotion: the Dream or the Law? Can James the Pharisee become a Christian?

As a young man James studies Jewish Law in Jerusalem. Awkward in the carpenter shop, he is entirely at home in scholarly pursuits. With honor he passes his examinations to win a seat at the feet of the most venerable rabbi in the school. He has little concern for simple human kindness, however, and is annoyed by too close contact with need and suffering. On visits to Nazareth, where

Jesus still works as carpenter to support the family since the death of Joseph, James makes everyone uncomfortable about his minute observance of ceremonial Law. Then one day Jesus makes the long-awaited announcement that he must leave James as head of the family and begin his own mission. James in sudden despair realizes that he has not been invited to help build the Kingdom. From time to time thereafter he receives news of his Brother's ministry, of his flagrant disregard of the Law when it hinders the work of mercy and love. In the words Jesus speaks in condemnation of the Pharisees, James is conscious of a personal rebuke.

The conflict within James becomes acute. Torn between his love for Jesus and his fidelity to Jewish Law, he offers to assist the Sanhedrin in apprehending Jesus for punishment as a heretic. It is a different matter when he discovers what that punishment is to be. His Pharisee's cloak gives him no warmth at Golgotha as he longs wildly to stumble up the grim hillside to rescue his Brother. After the Crucifixion James undertakes to do the things that he thinks Jesus would have done, not always understanding exactly why. In so doing he begins to feel a Presence at his side and speaks of this to his family:

I looked into the face of my enemy, whom I hated, and when I had spoken to him words of pity and forgiveness, behold, it was my Brother's face. And I have heard him speak. For when I turned aside from my journey to help a stranger lying by the roadside, it was my Brother's voice who called to me. And I have touched him. For when I saw a slave stumbling beneath a heavy burden and reached out to help him, the hand that I clasped was my Brother's hand.[50]

As James becomes filled with the spirit of Jesus, the Christians choose him for their leader, because, as they explain to him, "You are his brother, and you are like him."

Mrs. Wilson's portrayal of Jesus heightens the contrast between the two brothers. She draws a tender, intimate picture of him through the eyes of his family and neighbors. Little James awaits in thrilling anticipation the return of his beloved older Brother from a ten-day trip to Jerusalem. One day he watches Jesus willingly heed a Roman's sharp command to carry his pack a mile; then in amazement James hears Jesus offering in friendly fashion to carry it a second mile! Often the Brother tells stories to the younger ones in the home. One time he relates the parable of the Good Samaritan while they rest in the shade

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[50] The Brother (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1944), p. 321.

of the trees. He makes friends with the afflicted and with outcasts and foreigners, so that the public ministry seems but an extension of his former service to the humble folk of Nazareth. When he speaks in the synagogue of his home town, the people listen breathlessly to his words that are "as simply human as a loaf of bread." James wonders how his Brother can endure the crowds that gather about him, plucking at him, jostling him. "Good heavens, didn't his patience ever break, didn't he ever become so mortally tired of people's littlenesses that he'd like to throw up the whole thing! And if he didn't, why not? What was the secret?"[51]

In The Brother Mrs. Wilson has succeeded in establishing a relationship between James and Jesus out of which emerges the fundamental conflict of the plot. As in Asch's The Apostle, the protagonist, James, must meet and conquer within himself the same forces that struggle for the mastery in the world about him. In a sense James embodies law and Jesus, mercy. The author is not as successful in portraying Mary, the mother of Jesus. She lacks nobility and strength. Too docile and void of spiritual perception, she

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[51] Ibid., p. 262.

fails to measure up to the grandeur we have a right to expect in the mother of our Lord. One recalls Lloyd Douglas' incongruous familiarity in calling the early Christian leaders "Johnny" and "Joe" in Mrs. Wilson's unseemly use of "Aunt Mary" and "Uncle Jesus" by the little relatives who visit in the Nazareth home. Such infelicities do not appear in her second biblical novel, The Herdsman.

Sholem Asch's James bears much resemblance to Mrs. Wilson's in The Brother. He, too, loves the Jewish Law but is less adamant and harsh in fulfilling it. In his love for his elder Brother in Mary, Asch's James is too generous to feel envy. Jesus--lively, volatile, insatiably curious--is under grace; he, James--staid and sober--must depend upon the Law. Jesus knows every neighbor for miles around; James knows only one path, and that leads to the synagogue. He feels a shock of almost physical panic when Jesus' teaching supersedes the Law. Yet he keeps silent from respect and terror; Jesus might be the Messiah! In The Apostle, Asch pictures James as "a most devout and a most charitable man, who spends whole days in fasting and prayer. He succors the poor and takes upon himself the sufferings of others in love as a gift from God.

"James the Just" he is called. As he becomes like the mature Christian James of The Brother, his deeds and words lift him into leadership without his seeking it, as in Mrs. Wilson's story. His inner cleanliness convinces the High Priest that it is wholly unwise to lay hands upon James and his following.

The Herdsman, 1946

Mrs. Wilson turns from the New Testament to the Old for her second venture into biblical fiction. As in The Brother, she selects for The Herdsman a hero who has been largely overlooked by the novelists. James has often been portrayed as a minor character; her presentation of Amos is probably the first in fiction. In reconstructing the life of James and the family at Nazareth, Mrs. Wilson had an abundance of biblical and traditional material at hand; in telling the story of the herdsman of Tekoah, her task is one of creating from a few crumbs of personal information a plausible fictional biography.

Like Irving Fineman in Ruth, Mrs. Wilson has realized in The Herdsman, not only the intrinsic drama and spiritual content of the Old Testament original, but the similarity of Hebrew social problems to those of our

generation. Biblical scholars have long been aware of the tremendous import of the message of the herdsman Amos in a day when luxury had made the rich indolent and selfish, and of the poetic utterances of this prophet, sensitive to the cry of the despairing poor and the demands of a righteous God. With implied relevancy to our present world needs--for social security and freedom from economic and political fears--the author applies her pen to the difficult task of fictional re-creation of Amos.

Mrs. Wilson portrays the life of Amos from childhood to maturity, and ends the narrative as he awaits a martyr's death. The three divisions of The Herdsman indicate by their titles the setting for the successive phases of his life: "Bethel," "Samaria," and "Tekoa." It is not until Book III opens that the affairs of Amos correspond to events in the Old Testament record. All that has gone before is the author's concept of the kind of events that would have had to intervene and the sort of character that of necessity would have had to develop to produce such a prophet as Amos.

Bethel is the scene of the prophet's childhood. This "awkward, puny, too tall, much too thin twelve-year-old boy" is always the prophet in the making. To cry his

denunciation of the greedy rich who "sell the needy for a pair of shoes," Amos had to be poor himself and feel in his own body the pinch of starvation. Thus the author has him watch the priests grow fat while men lose their homes and sell their children into slavery. He sees the wheat fields round about his home parched in drought, eaten up with mildew, and destroyed by locusts. It is not the crop failures with the resulting poverty, however, that cause the most painful hurt. It is evil in the hearts of men: the smug satisfaction of the opulent who grind their neighbors under their heels and the complacent tyranny of the priests who demand ever greater sacrifices of the hard-pressed poor, who must meet exorbitant requirements of both Temple and King. Worst of all to Israelites who still hold in their memory the purer moral and spiritual atmosphere of the tent dwellers of the desert is the ugly note of sexual immorality that has crept into the Temple worship. Borrowing from the Canaanites their exaltation of Baal, Jewish priests are turning the high places into cults of fertility. The shameful apostasy becomes real to Amos when his sister Rizpah is tricked by their mother into joining the "Temple maidens."

The scene of Book II is laid in Samaria. Amos, who has been sold into slavery to pay the family's debts, is now serving in the household of Simon, an imaginary character who is the royal tax commissioner. Simon recognizes the boy's superior ability and sends him to the Royal Academy, where he receives the training that enables him later to voice in words of strength and beauty the deep things of his heart. Here in Samaria Amos encounters the antithesis of his early poverty. In Simon's home he observes the beds of ivory, the summer and winter houses, the wine bowls, and the sumptuous food he is later to immortalize in his cry against those who are selfishly at ease in Zion. Like Joseph in Egypt, he is offered elevation from slavery to the affluence of the favored few. Unlike Joseph, he has not the opportunity thereby of becoming a provider; he will be only another millstone about the neck of the slaves. "It's the blood of the poor they're drinking," he thinks to himself as he watches the rich. He voices the creed of the free world today when he muses: "I can't help feeling that people are important. And there's something inside of every person that--that belongs to himself."[52]

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[52] The Herdsman (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1946), p. 227.

Therefore, instead of accepting a place as son in Simon's house, Amos rises to his feet at the banquet in his honor to denounce the rich young men of Samaria. Mrs. Wilson gives her own translation of the famous passage:

> Shame on you, careless, lazy youth,
> Boasting in your security,
> Lolling on your ivory divans,
> Sprawling on your couches,
> Gorging yourselves with rare meats
> Regardless of the needs of the poor;
> Crooning and strumming your lutes,
> Gulping down wine by the bowlful,
> And using the best oils for cosmetics
> With never a single thought
> For the bleeding wounds of the nation![53]

With Book III the Amos of the sacred narrative emerges. He now dwells with his grandfather among the herdsmen of Tekoa. Besides working with his sheep, Amos, who is again a free man, dresses and harvests his crop of sycamore figs. He rejoices in the wild freedom of a desert clan, and discovers for himself the righteousness and justice of God. He realizes that the law of Moses is a mighty declaration of human rights, a peculiar covenant to establish a state of rightness between God and man. In a flash of divine insight he realizes its universality. "It's in

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[53] Ibid., p. 226.

the very nature of things," he says as he becomes spokesman for the burdened masses of the cities. When he cries out against Israel for trampling down the poor, he has but to close his eyes to remember the events of his childhood. When he verbally flays the "cows of Bashan," it is Simon's fat and indolent wife who voices protest. There is personal heartbreak in his denunciation of the priests' mockery as he thinks of the sacrifice of his own sister in the Temple worship. The basket of ripened fruit and the plumb line are not figments of the imagination but common experience touched with a prophet's vision. He appears suddenly to scorch evil-doers in words that have lived for 2700 years, then melts away into the safety of the crowd. Imprisoned at last by the authorities who fear his revolutionary ideas, Amos can face death with equanimity. He knows that the truth will live.

Mrs. Wilson manages well her introduction of three biblical characters not mentioned in the Book of Amos. These men--Hosea, Isaiah, and the author of the Book of Chronicles, whom she names Ben Esdras--can historically enter into Amos' life without violation of chronology or circumstance. Ben Esdras, hard at work rewriting the sacred

records of his people, may or may not have been a contemporary of Amos; Hosea and Isaiah actually lived in the same period with him. Isaiah is treated briefly but effectively; Hosea is one of the main characters. He appears as Amos' friend, whose later message is already being born out of his grief over the faithlessness of his wife Gomer. The author's bringing together of the three prophets--Amos, Isaiah, and Hosea--is a happy accomplishment. It is second only to her success in making the life of Amos seem plausible, even inevitable, in accordance with the few biographical facts. Her poetic version of the prophet's written messages deserves special mention. In his plea for the individual rights of man, he expresses eloquently the democratic ideals of our twentieth century world.

Prince of Egypt, 1949

In her third biblical novel, Prince of Egypt, Mrs. Wilson turns aside from the more obscure personages to join the long line of novelists portraying Moses, who, next to Jesus, has been the most popular hero in biblical fiction. Beginning in 1859 with Joseph Holt Ingraham's

Pillar of Fire, more than twenty fictional biographies of Moses have come from the press, half of them in the last quarter of a century. Names already familiar in literature appear in the roster of authors: G. J. Melville Whyte, with Sarchedon (1871); Sir Henry Rider Haggard, with The World's Desire (1890) and Moon of Israel (1918); Charlotte Yonge, with Pilgrimage of the Ben Beriah (1897). Translations from Europe have come from Theophile Gautier's The Romance of a Mummy (1882), Edmond Fleg's The Life of Moses (1928), and Warner Jansen's The Light of Egypt (1928). A third Moses book of the year 1928 came from American Louis Untermeyer. The poet's touch is often observed in his Moses, whose hero is presented as half mystic, half hypocrite. Zora Hurston, Negro novelist, followed in 1939 with Moses, Man of the Mountain, a whimsical version of the lawgiver, in which she makes a brilliant study of the emancipation of the Hebrew people as only a Negro can do it. Within the decade of the forties were published Mrs. Wilson's Prince of Egypt and Konrad Bercovici's The Exodus (1947); outside the American authors of this period may be noted Canadian William George Hardy, with his All the Trumpets Sounded (1942) and Thomas Mann, with Tables of the Law (1945).

Sholem Asch opened the fifties with his epic interpretation called Moses (1951).

Mrs. Wilson's Prince of Egypt won the Westminster Fiction Award for 1948 for the novel best portraying a fundamental human problem. She recognizes in the Exodus plot a powerful assertion of the rights of the individual; in it she finds, to quote from the cover jacket,

> a society faced with a set of social problems amazingly modern: displaced peoples, totalitarianism, oppressed minorities, labor unrest, group exploitation, strikes, and the first successful walkout on record. I find also a personality of towering proportions, a man who, more than twelve centuries before Jesus, recognized the supreme value of the individual, who not only conceived but enforced both a document of human rights and an emancipation proclamation over three thousand years before Jefferson and Lincoln. Add to this the intriguing picture of a prince who deliberately forfeited his crown, and what more could a novelist desire!

Such unlimited possibilities, however, can prove disastrous to the artistic structure of a novel. For her serious intent she uses characters that fit the typical adventure story, so that from the beginning a double purpose threatens the unity of the plot, which concerns the life of Moses from his young manhood in Pharaoh's court to the Red Sea crossing of the Israelites. The biblical events are interpreted and expanded but not often changed;

Moses' life at court is necessarily fictionized, as there is no scriptural source to draw upon.

Two characters lead the fight for freedom: Miriam and Moses. Bitterly rebellious against the Egyptian rulers, Miriam spurs her people to resist slavery. She literally and melodramatically spits defiance at the Egyptian courtiers and flings handfuls of clay in their faces. To her there is a crucial difference between the Hebrews and the other slaves in the land: "We are not slaves. . . . We never have been and we never shall be. You cannot make a man a slave by forcing him to make bricks, or by beating him. Only if he himself chooses."[54] She is the spearhead of an ill-fated labor uprising by the Hebrew brick makers, which she defends by saying, "It's striking straight at the body of the serpent. It's the only weapon we have to fight with--the labor of our hands."[55] In all ways but one she upholds Moses. To her the issue is between Hebrew and Egyptian; to Moses freedom must embrace all mankind.

Moses is the strong and fearless prince, surrounded by luxury and trained by the best minds in Egypt. An impelling curiosity sets him apart from the priests of Amon

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[54]Prince of Egypt (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1949), p. 205.

[55]Ibid., p. 204.

who work to maintain the status quo. All his life Moses has asked questions about man and God and life and death without finding enough of the truth to satisfy him. He begins to obey humanitarian impulses that arise within him, unbidden, until the day comes when he forsakes the court to join his people. Then one night by the Midian campfire he hears an old storyteller pronounce the truth that gives meaning and purpose to his life: "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him."

> It was like gazing for long torturing hours at a distorted image through the glass and then beholding it suddenly in perfect focus. For if God the Creator had made man in his own likeness, then every man was as important in his sight as every other. None had the right to place a burden on another's shoulders or to lay a lash across his back.[56]

Into the struggle for freedom Mrs. Wilson introduces typical features of the story of adventure. Romance transcends the battle for human rights as three women contend for the love of Moses. Princess Nefretiri, frankly Egyptian in her attitude toward wrongdoing, is willing to go to any lengths to win. Charming in her audacity, she almost shares with Moses the royal throne but loses in the end to Tharbis, the Kushite princess. The author rearranges biblical chronology to make Tharbis Moses' first wife instead of Zipporah, and pictures her as the conventional

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[56] Ibid., p. 338.

heroine of romance and adventure. When Moses as a young warrior in the service of Egypt is faced with the difficulty of choosing between an inevitable Kushite defeat and a bloodless conquest through marriage with the dusky princess of the walled kingdom of Kush, he accepts Tharbis with unwilling heart, happily to discover in her company serenity and peace and the abiding love of his life. Only when necessity demands that he flee from Egypt does he pronounce words of divorcement and leave her, for her own safety, in the care of a trusted friend. Across the wilderness he makes his way to the land of Midian, where, after a time, he marries Zipporah. But Zipporah, of the full, pouting lips and "high-boned cheeks flaming with restless color," leaves her husband's tent to follow a faithless lover; in due season Moses is reunited to the woman he loves.

Various novelists have been quick to recognize the fictional possibilities in the Kushite wife of Moses, unnamed and scarcely mentioned in the Old Testament. Asch has her one of the mixed multitude which followed the Israelites out of Egypt. She comes humbly to Moses with her trouble, and reports that the strangers who seek to worship the Lord are considered as lepers in the eyes of

the Hebrews. Then Moses, in order to teach his people that God is ever ready to receive all who approach Him, makes her his wife. It is a marriage in name only, but the act is rich in spiritual significance. William George Hardy, in All the Trumpets Sounded, places the Kushite wife, as does Mrs. Wilson, later than in the Bible story--in the period before Moses' flight from the court to the land of Midian. In each treatment the Kushite plays a leading role. With Hardy she is the hussy who all but ruins Moses; she is "shallow as a pool of muddy water into which every man steps." Thomas Mann, in Tables of the Law, draws a picture of her somewhat like that of Hardy. In his version she is a notorious Ethiopian female, a splendid piece of flesh with "pouting lips wherein to sink in a kiss might be an adventure to any man." Moses clings to her in shameful obstinacy in the face of the hostility of his own family, until, when Aaron and Miriam chide him, Jahveh appears in an earthquake to take his side.

The interpretation of Moses differs, also, according to the several writers. Sholem Asch's Moses is grander and of more epic proportions than Mrs. Wilson's, who is a blend of the great lawgiver-prophet and the hero of popular

romance. The Moses of Asch is the teacher of Israel whose every word and deed are in obedience to the Lord. "His family was all of Israel; father and mother he found in the God of Israel." In scenes where Asch uses the miraculous to enhance the grandeur of Moses' communion with God, William George Hardy, on the other hand, continually rationalizes the biblical narrative with labored explanations, such as: "Moses thought he heard a Voice in his mind," and "Moses seemed to feel the Presence," "A still, small voice seemed to say." Thomas Mann pictures Moses as the child of Pharaoh's daughter and a Hebrew slave to whom she took a fancy. In his story Joshua is the practical manager and soldier who gives reality to Moses' dreams. There is an odd flightiness about Moses, who keeps his eyes fixed on the "Invisibility of God"; on this text he "nagged and nudged, he pushed and shoved, he bounced and bossed and rubbed and scrubbed" at the Hebrews as he surrounded them with laws "with his little chisel, making the chips fly." Mrs. Wilson's concept of the lawgiver is generally more satisfying than that of either Hardy or Mann. Though not of the stature of Asch's Moses, Prince of Egypt is not dwarfed by comparison.

Mrs. Wilson's presentation of the supernatural events of the scriptural narrative is halfway between the

miraculous and the rational. She makes much of Moses' handling of the cobras, a skill he has learned from the priests of Amon, who can make them appear as rods in obedience to the human will. The plagues are described actually descending upon the Egyptians--as the natural processes have taken their course time and again in the past. Moses, however, recognizes in the course of nature the hand of God. "Suppose," he says, "we give that something a name. Suppose we call it--Yahweh!" Again in the Red Sea crossing it is Yahweh who works the miracle but in a way that men of the desert have witnessed before. Moses stands on the shore until the tide runs out and the white sand shows through the shoals in a long bar across to the other side; then he leads the Hebrew host into the shallow waters.

As a readable adventure story, Mrs. Wilson's novel is filled with romance and excitement. As a problem book dealing with the inalienable rights of man to freedom and the innate necessity of his struggle to gain that independence against whatever odds, Prince of Egypt is also convincing. But neither aim is accomplished as fully as it would have been if the author had maintained a single purpose. In spite of her narrative gifts, Mrs. Wilson encounters difficulty in attributing to the stock characters

of the adventure story the moral and spiritual depth necessary to face and solve some of humanity's knottiest problems. Of her three biblical novels--The Brother, The Herdsman, and Prince of Egypt--The Herdsman is the most artistic. With a surer handling of her materials than in The Brother and with less fictional embroidery and wavering from a fixed purpose than in Prince of Egypt, Mrs. Wilson presents effectively through her story of Amos the cause of social justice for the common man.

XI. Florence Marvyne Bauer

One year after the publication of Mrs. Wilson's first biblical novel, a second woman novelist began writing biblical fiction. During the forties Florence Marvyne Bauer added two books to the rapidly growing list of scriptural narratives: a story about Jesus called Behold Your King (1945) and Abram Son of Terah (1948), one of the few novels, until recent years, about the Father of the Hebrews. Mrs. Bauer's role of author represents only a part of a full life as mother of three children, wife of an eminent physician, artist, radio script writer, and collaborator with her husband in health literature; she turned

to biblical fiction as an escape from worry during World War II.

Behold Your King, 1945

For Behold Your King Mrs. Bauer has chosen the epistolary technique, long familiar to students of the novel. From the days of Richardson's Pamela, narratives in the form of letters have appeared at intervals; Rev. J. H. Ingraham used the device in his best-selling biblical novels of a century ago. Mrs. Bauer has somewhat modified the form by interspersing personal letters with the impersonal viewpoint of the omniscient author. The need for correspondence arises between Jonathan, a young Jew of Cyrene, and his widowed mother, who has sent him to Jerusalem to study Jewish law while he lives in the home of her brother Joseph of Arimathea. Under these circumstances the author has Jonathan witness and report the ministry of Jesus.

Mrs. Bauer introduces so many biblical characters that she has had to use ingenuity in bringing them together in an organized plot. Thus Simon the leper plays the double part of leper and husband of Martha of Bethany. Jonathan's sweetheart Elizabeth is the sister of Joanna,

wife of Chuza--Herod's steward, whose discipleship is noted in St. Luke's Gospel. Simon of Cyrene, who carries the cross of Jesus, is Jonathan's servant; Joseph of Arimathea is Jonathan's uncle. It is Jonathan who gives drink to Jesus on the cross, and it is he who arranges to lay the Lord's body in the tomb in Joseph's garden. Jairus and Nicodemus are close friends of the family; Jonathan is a frequent visitor in the Bethany home of Mary and Martha. With relationships planned in this fashion, either Jonathan or someone very close to him can be present at all the major events of Jesus' ministry.

Fictional embellishment appears in the romance of Jonathan and Elizabeth. Through this means Mrs. Bauer pleads the cause of an intelligent woman in a man-made world. She first pictures Jewish home life with its firm patriarchal rule. Jonathan himself is forced to bow to the will of his uncle and guardian in the choice of a wife. Only a lucky combination of his assumed role of Shakespearean Petruccio toward a shrewish wife and a most timely charge of heresy because of his belief in the Messiahship of Jesus enable the reluctant young husband to secure a divorce before the consummation of his union with Judith,

the rich maiden selected by Joseph. It is Elizabeth whom Jonathan loves: a young woman trained by her father, like Victor MacClure's Magdalene, in studies and skills ordinarily reserved for men. At first Jonathan is shocked to find her manager of Chuza's household; it was a day when only economic necessity afforded a woman entrance into the business world. Jonathan is astounded at her erudition and irritated when she argues with him on holy matters. Incredulous and scornful, he speaks in anger to his friend Jairus:

> "A true Hebrew woman will not meddle in men's business, but will spin and weave and give to the poor and sew garments for her family and--and--" Jonathan stopped as he saw the broad grin on his friend's round face.
>
> "Who do you think manages Joanna's household?" asked Jairus. . . . Elizabeth oversees all that household, her sister having given it into her hands. No merchant cheats her in the market place, no servant finds it profitable to dawdle over his task--"[57]

With Elizabeth, Mrs. Bauer faces the problem of the business and professional woman of today. The Hebrew heroine is the fulfillment of female America's dream of the modern career girl who succeeds in business, stays charming and beautiful, and marries the hero. Jonathan's resentment at Elizabeth's superior intelligence and business ability

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[57] Behold Your King (Chicago: Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1945), p. 156.

gives way rapidly before her beauty and charm; as the story ends, he is writing to his mother about "my beloved wife Elizabeth."

Mrs. Bauer, like many other biblical novelists, makes Joseph of Arimathea a leading character. With her he is an unbending Pharisee, stern and just. Childless, he plans to leave his large holdings in olive and fig and pomegranate orchards to Jonathan, until the young man declares his faith in the Galilean Rabbi and divorces Judith. Only when Jesus cures his beloved wife Hannah, long a cripple, does Joseph himself believe in the Messiah, forgive Jonathan, and bless the marriage of his nephew and Elizabeth. Gladys Malvern, in _According to Thomas_, has Joseph the kindly, understanding friend of young Thomas, who, like Mrs. Bauer's Jonathan, has come to Jerusalem to study Jewish law. Her Joseph is the seeker after light who listens quietly to the teachings of Jesus and secretly becomes his follower. After the Resurrection he openly acknowledges himself a Christian, sells all his possessions, and donates them to the new brotherhood. The best Joseph of recent years is the one portrayed by Thomas Costain in _The Silver Chalice_ (1952). This Joseph is a venerable old man, the patriarch of the early Church, who guards reverently the plain little cup from which Jesus drank at the

Last Supper. From the vantage of wealth and power he has shielded the Christians against Jewish opposition; as sagacious as he is benevolent, he leaves that wealth and power in hands that will continue to minister in the spirit of Jesus.

The major conflict of Behold Your King, one which occurs in various New Testament novels, is between the two concepts of Messiahship represented by Bar Abbas and Jesus. Bar Abbas plans by might and power to establish the Kingdom; Jesus is the suffering Saviour who lays his claim upon the hearts of men. Who will win? Or are there to be two Messiahs: one of suffering and one of glory? Everywhere devout Jews anticipate his coming. The Sanhedrin sends investigators to listen to each new voice that is raised to announce the Kingdom. A similar struggle for Messiahship is presented by the Austro-Hungarian Emery Bekessy in Barabbas (1946), as Barabbas, apostle of hatred, opposes Jesus, apostle of love. The highway robber, self-styled liberator of Israel, finds no community of purpose with a Dreamer who preaches deliverance from sin. He prefers alliance with the wily Annas, who believes hate is stronger than love and violence than humility. In The Robber (1949), the Canadian Bertram Brooker adds to the

character of the highwayman a mixture of prophet and Robin Hood. The Leveller, as he is called, robs the rich to help the poor while he preaches to his victims of the time when all men will be equal and none will go hungry. This greathearted champion of the poor is something of a poet who can sacrifice his life for an ideal and a dream; his love for the beautiful sister of Joseph of Arimathea furnishes the romance of the plot. This Barabbas learns to believe in Jesus and is horrified when he is sent to Calvary. A classic contrast between Barabbas and Jesus appeared with the English translation of Swedish Par Lagerkvist's Barabbas in 1951. Leader of the robber gang, Lagerkvist's Barabbas has taken his pleasures casually until his strange release in place of Jesus. After the Crucifixion he is shunned with loathing by the Christians, who call him "The Acquitted." It is as if the dead Man's spirit has possessed him. He is fascinated by the idea of a gospel of love even as he struggles agonizingly against it. With Lagerkvist, the spiritual torment of Barabbas becomes every man's effort to solve the riddle of life. Can love conquer hate on this earth? This question, asked alike by Mrs. Bauer, Bekessy, and Brooker, is the theme of Lagerkvist's Barabbas, one of the greatest of all biblical novels. It is the crucial problem of the

nations of the world.

Abram Son of Terah, 1948

In preparation for her second biblical novel, Abram Son of Terah, Mrs. Bauer did research in Philadelphia at the University Museum, where she found particular help in the archeological discoveries of Sir Leonard Wooley concerning Ur of the Chaldees. Such information was used to advantage in her re-creation of that ancient city during the childhood and youth of Abraham. As the title suggests, the plot is built about young Abram in his father's household before he goes out with changed name to fulfill God's promise to a chosen people. Mrs. Bauer's narrative draws upon the biblical source only for names and backgrounds; the action takes place before the events of the Genesis account. Her drawing, on the inside cover of the book, of Abram's elaborate family tree sends the Bible student scurrying to the scriptures to find which of the sundry wives and concubines of Terah and his sons actually are mentioned there. Restricted only by the ultimate requirements of the Old Testament story, the author relies almost wholly upon historical research and a fertile imagination for the structure of her plot.

Mrs. Bauer's purpose is to account for Abraham's aspiration to father a tribe devoted to the worship of an unseen God. Like Dorothy Clarke Wilson in The Herdsman, she has deemed it necessary to discover in the hero's childhood those elements that were already shaping his destiny. Mrs. Bauer, however, does not succeed as well as Mrs. Wilson does with young Amos in making the fictitious events of Abram's early years seem inevitable in view of later known facts. The bearded patriarch of the Hebrews need not have been a lonesome little boy brushing the fine reddish dust from his bare feet as he wanders disconsolately about the streets of Ur, or as he fights off scavenger dogs let loose upon him by evil men. The author uses such incidents to point up Abram's sense of insecurity, of not belonging, which encourages him to seek a "patron," a god who will protect and bless him. Often he wonders whether it is a cruel jest of the gods that he should so yearn after deity. To explain Abram's mature concept of the Most High God in a day when men commonly worshiped many gods, Mrs. Bauer invents a slave called Eber the Amorite to impart to Abram his faith in Yah, an unseen God of righteousness. How Eber came to know this God is screened in mystery. Very gradually, with backsets in times of disaster, Abram shares Eber's tranquillity and selflessness. Once he reacts in anger to the

slave's childlike belief in Yah. When offered his freedom, Eber says to Abram:

> "My God used you to perform His will."
>
> "You speak as if I were a tool of your God," said Abram, his voice shaking with resentment.
>
> "All men are Yah's," said Eber quietly, "for He has created them."
>
> "He is not my god! Nor will I be his tool!"
>
> "You do not acknowledge Him as patron, but He inspired you to give me my freedom."
>
> "I will not obey this foreign god!" cried the son of Terah. "You shall stay as you are. You shall continue to be a slave."[58]

Between periods of doubt Abram's faith grows through association with the godly Eber until he dreams of establishing a family in whom he will foster the worship of Yah from their earliest years: "a great house of upright men like Eber, men who would gradually draw to themselves others who were dissatisfied, as he had been, with the gods of their people."[59] He even shares Eber's dying hope to escape oblivion in the hands of a God he trusts in death as well as life. Armed with that trust, Abram

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[58] Abram Son of Terah (Indianapolis and New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1948), p. 301.

[59] Ibid., p. 353.

at last sets out toward the far northwest "into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance."

In the fifties have come two more Abraham stories; The Covenant (1951) by Polish Zofia Kossak-Szczucka and No Other Gods (1954) by Penfield Wilder. Mme. Kossak, like Mrs. Bauer, is both novelist and artist. Her story begins where Mrs. Bauer's ends, with the covenant between Abraham and Jehovah. Both writers have had to visualize a legendary, almost prehistoric setting. Most of the scene of Mrs. Bauer's book is laid in Ur, the commercial metropolis on the Euphrates. Here taxes are constantly rising with the king's effort to hold together his unwieldy realm. Life is circumscribed by law and custom and the greed of the Mesopotamian priests; the more individual conflict of wills is reflected in Terah's complex household of wives, concubines, children, and slaves. Mme. Kossak also pictures ancient Ur, with the sureness of reality, but her scene changes to accommodate the requirements of the biblical account, directing the reader in turn to Haran, Egypt, Sodom, and Canaan. The daily life of Abram's nomad tribe replaces Mrs. Bauer's picture of Terah's Chaldean household; especially good is the description of Sodom, that accursed city with its famous

slime pits exuding their black, greasy ooze as if to suggest the unholy character of the inhabitants.

It is interesting to compare the versions of the father and brothers of Abraham. In Mme. Kossak's story Terah is the gifted carver and lover of all things beautiful. Somewhat childish in his old age, he is nevertheless held in utmost respect and filial love by Ab-Ram. Mrs. Bauer has Terah a younger man in the beginning, still active in the affairs of the household and still welcoming his own children into the world. He is a man of honorable reputation who deals justly with his family and with the slaves under his care. Both authors make Abram the youngest of the three sons of Terah listed in Genesis, although, in citing the genealogy, the Old Testament writer gives the names in the following order: Abram, Nahor, and Haran. Thus each novelist must seek to explain the fact that Abram and not his brothers went forth with Terah and eventually founded a spiritual succession. Mme. Kossak has it that Haran, the eldest son, is already dead, and that the second son, Nahor, suffers from extreme obesity, which prevents his assuming the headship of the clan. Mrs. Bauer, for her part, presents the eldest brother Haran as especially understanding and sympathetic

toward little Abram, and his death occurs almost at the book's end. The second brother, Nahor, is obnoxious, selfish, and so ambitious that old Terah at last gladly leaves home to join Abram as he goes forth with his beautiful wife to live among the tent dwellers.

Ab-Ram of The Covenant experiences a spiritual quest more impelling than that of Mrs. Bauer's Abram, whose romance with Sarai lightens the intensity of purpose. Ab-Ram is plagued with doubts of the god Marduk, greedy for gold and human sacrifice. Can a mortal man come to know God, or is He impervious to human need? It is a deep thirst for God that brings to Ab-Ram divine response in visions and promptings of the Inner Voice. The author herself, who has become unusually sensitive to the problems of mankind through her experience in three wars, voices through Abraham her own faith, her appreciation of the fierce urge of possessed people for freedom, and her belief in the values in life beyond food and raiment. Abram Son of Terah deals with a young man in love, who has not yet been released from his father's house; The Covenant, picturing Abraham in his maturity, is more serious in purpose, more felicitous in phrase, more convincing in the characters who round out the biblical outlines.

The second Abraham narrative of the fifties, No Other Gods by Wilder Penfield, introduces to the world of fiction a man who, like Frank Slaughter, has achieved eminence as a physician. Trained as a Rhodes scholar at Oxford, he has served as President of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada and of the American Neurological Society; moreover, he holds special orders of merit from three countries: the United States, Great Britain, and France. Unlike Slaughter, however, he does not emphasize the medical aspects of the day of which he writes. He is more concerned with a re-creation of ancient Ur, made possible by recent archeological findings.

Continuing his mother's interest in writing a biblical novel about Sarah, Penfield found occasion for research when the fortunes of World War II took him to Mesopotamia. There in Teheran he began reading Wooley's account of the excavations of Ur, the very study used by Mrs. Bauer in her Abram Son of Terah. Penfield then supplemented his reading with visits to the Iraq Museum, a journey to the ruins themselves, and a close examination of the surrounding country. He revisited Ur and made friends with the Arabs. Upon his return to the West, he studied the collections in both the British Museum and the University of Pennsylvania (where Mrs. Bauer found most of her material).

Thus Penfield, the doctor, has applied to his new task the method of scientific investigation learned in his own medical profession.

He portrays the young man Abram as he takes over the tribal leadership of the Habiru, the men of Haran, who were to become the Hebrew people. The biblical romance with the charming and beautiful Sarah is inevitably a part of his life; yet the author consistently points up the mission of Abram. Son of an idol maker, he becomes an idol breaker, the "great iconoclast of all time." Upon the death of his grandfather, tribal authority is placed--not in Terah's hands--but in Abram's. In revolt against the religion of the moon god Nanner, he breaks the great Nanner idol into a thousand pieces and flees for his life into the marshes. A year later he can say: "I have found the one God who will be our God, the God of the Habiru. He bids us leave the countries that belong to others and journey into a land that he will give us for our own."[60] Old Terah blesses Abram and announces solemnly before the family council: "Abram has left the moon god.

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[60] No Other Gods (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1954), p. 280.

He has seen a vision and my young men will follow him. . . . There is a strange spirit in my people, a flame that nothing can quench."[61]

Thus have three authors presented Abraham, founder of that monotheism which is the common basis of Judaism, Mohammedanism, and Christianity. Attracted by recent archeological discoveries and moved by the spiritual significance of Abraham's decision to leave Ur, they have attempted to portray that ancient civilization against the unchanging patterns of human conduct: Mme. Kossak with literary excellence, Penfield with historical soundness, and Mrs. Bauer with a readable interpretation of the young man Abram.

XII. John Brett Robey

The Innovator, 1945

In the year of Mrs. Bauer's Behold Your King, there appeared another one of the many novels about Jesus: The Innovator (1945) by John Brett Robey. The plot differs Mrs. Bauer's by leaving Jesus (or Jashua, as he is called) entirely in the shadowy background except for the final

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[61] Ibid., p. 309.

trial, and features the various members of the Sanhedrin in their manoeuvering for power. Thus the novel becomes an account of the men who worked to destroy Jesus because he was an innovator--a threat to the status quo, which the leaders of the Jewish church found to be exceedingly profitable to them exactly as it was. Robey begins his narrative on Monday of Holy Week. He portrays the members of the Council already setting aside their disagreements to draw together in a coalition against the new claimant for Messiahship, lest they lose a part of their huge profits from the Temple trade, now swollen to fabulous proportion at the Passover season. It is the possibility of change--for good or ill--that confronts the Sanhedrin in the person of the Innovator. The efforts of the leaders to destroy his influence comprise the plot.

Robey is particularly concerned with the motives of the members of the Council: of the High Priest Caiaphas, who is unfailingly shrewd in his ability to manipulate and control the vital issues; of the imaginary Matthan, unscrupulous leader of the Parisees, who uses events of Holy Week to further his own rise to power; of the wealthy merchant Porphirios, another fictitious character who vies with Matthan for the mastery; of Joseph Ramoth,

evidently meant to be Joseph of Arimathea, who is excluded from the hastily called meeting of the Sanhedrin for the trial of Jesus; of Ben Israel, imaginary member who dares to raise his voice against the policy of the High Priest and is swiftly crucified for his audacity. These and others we follow from the Council meeting into their homes. One or two are worthy men in Israel; most of them are scheming and hard, conniving with those who commit murder and arson, and not squeamish about smoking opium or associating with women of the street. All in all, the author gives an ugly picture of Jewish leadership.

Robey, like Herman Wouk in The Caine Mutiny (1941), makes much of a trial scene. All who may conceivably raise their voices in protest are excluded from the court room. The proceedings are reported from the viewpoint of Hayyim, the most thoughtful member of the entire Council. He surveys the crowd before him and sees only petty men. "Strange judges they were awaiting their destined victim! Not one of them of any stature."[62] Hayyim feels disgust at having to share responsibility for what the priests have planned. He watches the witnesses come and go, and he weighs the

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[62]The Innovator (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Doran and Company, Inc., 1945), p. 255.

significance of their words. He sees the late members of the Sanhedrin denied entrance to the court room; he thinks how inevitable it is for prophets to meet their death at the hands of the High Priests. Then, turning to one of his friends, Hayyim offers an astounding interpretation of the drama before them:

> There is, however, another possibility. . . . Only a possibility, mark you; but one which has certainly been overlooked. . . . I mean, of course, we've seen many messiahs condemned to death; and we've heard about many more. But has it occurred to you just how momentous this trial would be, how immortal the name of each councilor--and I include even those who for one reason or another are absent--if the prisoner were indeed the son of God?[63]

Unfortunately, the ensuing account of the trial grows tedious, its climax falling short of the reader's expectation.

For those interested in following the processes of minds that deal in intrigue, The Innovator offers a fascinating study. Others will be less enthusiastic about the emphasis on evil and sordidness, unrelieved by humor or goodness. If the author had brought Jesus out of the background long enough for the reader to catch his invigorating personality and loving spirit, the dark atmosphere of

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[63] Ibid., p. 282.

conspiracy might have been projected more successfully into bold relief. Robey's interest in the legal procedure of Jesus' trial, however, and his focus of attention upon the members of the Sanhedrin present an agreeably unconventional approach to the familiar gospel narrative.

Robey's portrayal of the opposition of established leadership to any threat to their power touches upon an almost universal reaction to innovation, whether good or bad. A tendency toward conservatism sometimes checks harmful radicalism; often there is a determined closing of ranks against beneficial measures. It is difficult, for instance, for members of a political group to follow a leader whose ideals are higher than those of the party bosses. It is hard for any professional body to admit that improvement can come from one not properly accredited. The Puritans fled religious persecution in Europe to become intolerant of doctrinal variation in America. Robey has realized in his title and his theme the old truth that the heretic of yesterday often becomes today's saint.

The two publications in 1946 of biblical fiction take the reader back to the pages of the Old Testament to two perennial favorites: Joseph and David. Gertrude

Eberle calls her novel Charioteer: A Story of Old Egypt in the Days of Joseph, and Gladys Schmitt chooses the simple title of David the King.

XIII. Gertrude Eberle

Charioteer, 1946

Miss Eberle's narrative primarily concerns the handsome slave Raanah, who rides in the caravan of Ishmaelite merchantmen. Secondary interest relates to Joseph, whom the Ishmaelite traders purchase in Canaan from a group of Midianites. Traveling together, Raanah and Joseph become fast friends, and their paths run parallel after their arrival in Egypt. Both serve Potiphar and later Pharaoh. According to Genesis, Joseph first becomes Potiphar's majordomo, then provider of all Egypt; Raanah rises from stableboy to membership in Potiphar's Basilisk Guard, in which he eventually replaces Potiphar as captain. Raanah's devotion to his moonstone image of Ishtar and Joseph's to the Most High God create the central conflict, which is resolved as Raanah wins the final chariot race in Pharaoh's Festival of the Gods.

With implicit faith in Ishtar, Raanah wears her image as a talisman: a grinning face exquisitively carved

from a single piece of feldspar and set in a frame of rubies, emeralds, and pearls. It was believed by many that the owner of the moonstone would come to an evil end if his heart were not pure, but that the righteous, believing owner would lead a charmed existence. Thus Raanah feels secure under its magic protection until Joseph's talk of his unseen God brings doubts of the idol's efficacy. When disaster befalls him, Raanah flings the idol into the river. Then begins his religious disturbance, which is not quieted until Joseph places about his friend's neck the handsome jeweled pendant--not an image of Jehovah, the author says, but a reminder of His presence that will enable the charioteer to win the great race. Even with such careful explanation, the reader is not sure whether the Presence in the pendant effects victory for Raanah or the presence in the idol (which has reappeared in the possession of Hadar the villain) brings disaster to his rival. Either way, it is principally a matter of winning or losing the race; for the chariot race--a blend of the famous ride of Ben Hur, with the rider atop two horses moving in concerted action, and a medieval tournament in which the fair lady tosses her rose for the contestant to wear--is the climax of the tale.

Miss Eberle makes of her book more a juvenile adventure story than serious biblical fiction. With Raanah the dashing hero, whose "shapely head, cameo-cut features, and graceful stride gave hint of proud Chaldean ancestry," she portrays Joseph as hardly more than a stock figure of faith and goodness. All the characters are types. Asenath, later Joseph's wife, and Bashia, beloved of Raanah, are beautiful and charming ladies; the amah is an ugly crone; Joseph and Raanah are handsome and strong; Pharaoh is ugly and arbitrary; Hadar is the complete villain. The evil characters are punished, and the good are rewarded with riches and honor and success in love, although a melodramatic array of obstacles is duly, almost mechanically, assembled to delay the final bliss.

The biblical events, which cover four books of Mann's Joseph saga, are touched lightly in Charioteer. With indirect concern for Joseph, Miss Eberle relates what is necessary to fill out the story of Raanah, who lived "in old Egypt in the days of Joseph." She therefore spares Joseph the agony of rebirth from the pit that he experiences at the hands of Mann; Raanah's caravan bound for Egypt stops just long enough to buy the Hebrew from the Midianites. Then when the young men reach Egypt, that ancient land described with such thoroughness and

accuracy in the German classic, their impression of it is expressed in a single sentence: "Their hearts beat strangely but lightly as they looked upon the vivid beauty of Egypt and the glory of the orange sunset flaming across the sky."[64] Whereas Mann devotes the entire third book of the saga, Joseph in Egypt, to Joseph's service under Potiphar, Miss Eberle makes immediate the Hebrew's advancement in the household; the episode about Potiphar's wife is mentioned only as it is indirectly reported by one of the characters. In Charioteer Joseph is constantly visited by his friends during the long imprisonment; then suddenly when Pharaoh calls him forth to interpret the dream of famine, his elevation is accomplished within the hour. Miss Eberle does not attempt any explanation of Joseph's rise to power beyond that given in Genesis. For her to add a volume like Mann's Joseph the Provider to tell of Joseph's attainments under Pharaoh would have been beside the point in an adventure story that culminates in Raanah's chariot race.

Charioteer makes pleasant reading on the adolescent level. It lacks the deeper undercurrents that usually accompany biblical fiction; probably the author had no intention of being either subtle or profound. She makes no

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[64] Charioteer: A Story of Old Egypt in the Days of Joseph (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1946), p. 121.

notable contribution in the interpretation of biblical characters or events; there seems to be no parallel to problems of our own day. Henry James Forman facetiously sets the novel in its historical perspective by suggesting that the heroines, Asenath and Bashia, "remind one a little of two Victorian damsels entertaining their beaux."[65]

XIV. Gladys Schmitt

David the King, 1946

In the second biblical novel of 1946, *David the King*, Gladys Schmitt portrays the greatest of the Hebrew kings, one who has been the hero of song and story for three thousand years. Biblical novelists have not neglected him. Since J. H. Ingraham's *The Throne of David* in 1860, at least ten works of fiction have been fashioned about the Sweet Singer of Israel. Among these is numbered Roark Bradford's delightful interpretation in Negro dialect entitled *Ol' King David and the Philistine Boys*; two realistic versions appeared in the twenties called *David the Son of Jesse* (1922), by Marjorie Strachey, and *Giant Killer* (1928), by Elmer Davis. Miss Schmitt's recent

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[65]"Captain of Pharaoh's Guard," *New York Times Book Review*, October 27, 1946, p. 25.

version may be termed a fictional biography of the psalmist from youth to old age.

Miss Schmitt, now Mrs. Simon Goldfield of New York City, is a recognized poet and novelist, who, since 1933, has been associated with Scholastic magazine. Her David the King is primarily a psychological novel in which she first portrays David in his youth, with stress upon those elements of character that are to shape the course of his life. She pictures his relation to God and his faith, that slowly matures through the years. She feels that to interpret David one must understand thoroughly his connection with the House of Kish: with King Saul, with Jonathan, and with Michal. Especially she emphasizes the influence of David's wives--of Bathsheba in particular and, in this narrative, of Abishag.

Miss Schmitt's young David in many ways resembles Mann's Joseph of Joseph and His Brothers. Both lads, of the same extraordinary comeliness, are seventeen as the stories begin; both are gifted above their fellows and possess an almost fatal charm and grace. Behind Joseph stands Father Jacob--indulgent but righteous, the faithful patriarch whom Jahweh loves. Behind David is wizened Jesse, tender but awesome in his stern demands on behalf of

the Almighty. Even the remembrance of his father's face for either boy brings steadiness of purpose and resolution to remain pure in heart in a world that rolls out like a magic carpet beneath their feet. The difference between them lies somewhere in the inner core of character and in the exigencies of life. Bondage and imprisonment temporarily cloud Joseph's bright dreams of glory; David climbs steadily upward toward the throne of Israel. Within both is a deep longing for purity and godliness. With Joseph it is of sufficient intensity to regulate the choices of his entire life; with David the brightness is occasionally dimmed as he succumbs to the desires of the flesh.

Early in life Miss Schmitt's David evidences no great longing for God. The reader is inclined to agree with Saul's comment on his armor-bearer's selfishness when he says that David did not really love Michal, "that he loved Saul more than her, loved Jonathan more than Saul, loved himself above Jonathan." As he grows older, however, David begins to reach a hand out to the Eternal. He kneels in prayer before the ark; he dances in ecstasy before Jahweh in the palm-strewn streets of Jerusalem. When Bathsheba's child is sick unto death, David searches his own

soul in sudden anxiety. Is this God's punishment for his sin against Uriah? Unable, according to Miss Schmitt, to repent of his great transgression, he nevertheless finds a measure of peace in honest confession. As king, he cannot meet the issues of state objectively as does Joab, his crookedly loyal captain, and gradually, tormented with conscience, he comes to think of Jahweh as "the blank Presence, the eyeless God." In his old age, Abishag restores his lost faith in the goodness of God, and, as death approaches, he feels himself surrounded by all the beloved dead:

> Behold, they are not many, but only one Everlasting and Changeless Beloved. . . . For to love, to yearn to love oneself utterly in any mortal beloved, is to strive darkly, imperfectly, in spite of all the exigencies of the flesh and the world, to become a part of that Everlasting Being from whom we issued forth and unto whom we go at last. All these, the dead and the living, all these and I myself, were divided from the Eternal and the Changeless only for a little while. . . . A moment, only a moment, and I will be merged forever in the Lord with those whom I have loved.[66]

David's love for Michal is pictured as part of the complicated pattern of his relationship to the whole royal household of Saul. The charm of the bright-haired Judahite wins immediate response from both Saul and his two children so that each contends for David's love in a manner shrewdly

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[66] David the King (New York: The Dial Press, 1946), p. 631.

described by the half-mad King: "No, now, if three of us divide his heart, each will have only an insignificant part of it. That is, unless he has a mighty heart."[67] With a clean, boyish frankness Michal sets about winning David's love, and, though he marries her, it is to Jonathan that his heart cleaves. The author portrays the close bond between David and Jonathan as an inordinate love, fiercely opposed by King Saul--partly from personal and political jealousy, partly from paternal wrath because the lutist has so "invaded the tabernacle of Jonathan's soul."

Miss Schmitt draws a magnificent picture of Saul. One wonders whether it is David or Saul who is the real hero, for the Lion of Benjamin in his madness approaches the grand proportions of Shakespeare's Lear. As David once said, "it was impossible to tell whether Saul's madness was a matter of shutting his eyes against truth or of seeing truth more plainly than other men saw it in an equivocal world."[68] The piercing glance of the King was disconcerting in its ability to read the heart of his subjects, who could never--even in his later madness--erase from their minds the memory of his kingliness. Neither could Jonathan forget the gentle father who, he said,

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[67] Ibid., p. 94.

[68] Ibid., p. 200.

"lifted us when we fell, and . . . carried us when we were sick, and . . . held us upon his knees and fed us with his own hand."[69] David, weeping for the hero of Jabesh-Gilead, refrained from violence against the broken tabernacle of the sleeping King at his feet. To him Saul was still the Lord's anointed.

The modern novelist who chooses David for hero is confronted with the dilemma of explaining a half dozen wives. Of course, he can accept the situation at its face value: oriental polygamy. An oriental monarch would be expected to have more wives than an ordinary citizen. In the light of twentieth-century morals--however well or poorly we realize them--such a hero, who is also in the Messianic succession, may offend the senibilities of the reader. At least, David's conduct must be made to appear understandable. To this end, Miss Schmitt gives a warmly human picture of each wife as a woman in her own right. Each gives place to her successor as one after another is chosen to be the royal bride, until Bathsheba comes into the palace to satisfy for many years David's longing for love and companionship. Only when her ambition for Solomon's succession supersedes her love for

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[69] Ibid., p. 70.

the King, does David again experience loneliness of heart, which, according to the author, is alleviated by the youthful Abishag, who comforts him in his old age. Except for the romantic presentation of Abishag, whose simple goodness saves the situation from melodrama, Miss Schmitt has done a remarkably realistic job of re-creation without whitewashing human passions that often result in disillusionment and sorrow.

The author has an almost poetic ability in conjuring up fresh and apt images. When, for instance, young David mounted the ladder to the roof of his father's home, he beheld there old Jesse and Samuel, their beards and hair appearing as "a flowing whiteness under the moon." As he then waited to receive the blessing of the ancient seer, he noticed that the "scent of the old man's body was faint, holy, and desolate, like a sanctuary long closed." Two lines suffice to describe Joab, whose destiny seemed foreordained to be linked to that of David. David despised him as "a dog of the wilderness who could not be put off by subtleties, but so subtle a dog that nobody but Cain could kick him." Often words give habitation to whispers of elusive beauty as when old Jesse and his wife were sitting together before the hearth, their backs to the dying embers: "Old lovers . . . leaning against the window

sill and staring westward to the hills. Gold gone, blood gone, and nothing left but a trembling and a whispering."[70] Miss Schmitt's poetic expression, her psychological and dramatic insights, her power to infuse characters and incidents with reality and life--all combine to lift her among the best historical novelists of our day.

In 1951 two other fictional versions of David were published: David and Bathsheba by Ibn-Zahav, a native of Israeli, and The Valley of Vision by Vardis Fisher, Idaho novelist. Fisher's novel, which is primarily the story of Solomon, begins with a grisly picture of old King David on his deathbed. Resource to sorcery and hideous charms has failed to divert the Evil Eye, and one last frantic effort to dispel the demons fighting for possession of David's life centers in Abishag. The frightened girl is thrust forward to battle the powers of darkness with the magic of her virgin youth. For Miss Schmitt's picture of the pure communion between the souls of David and Abishag, is substituted the hysterical sobbing of the maiden who is pushed into the room and left alone to succor the shrunken and repulsive old monarch. A short time later,

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[70] Ibid., p. 11.

Bathsheba, a Hittite with a hooked and bulbous nose who is driven by an inexorable determination to put her son upon the throne, forces open David's faded and sunken eyes, demanding that he fulfill his promise of proclaiming Solomon's succession. With reluctance David agrees. Ibn-Zahav, like Fisher, opens his narrative with the old King upon his bed. His David, unlike Fisher's, lives long enough to dictate to his scribe the story of his long, eventful life, all of which he interprets in terms of his love for Bathsheba. Since he was fifteen years old, he has loved this pretty shepherdess of Gillo. No all-consuming desire for Jahweh directs his life; it is his love for Bathsheba that guides him. She inspires his every act of heroism and renown. At sight of her he bursts forth into poetry, he plays the harp. When Bathsheba is forced into marriage with Uriah the Hittite, David risks his life in battle. When he marries Michal, it is only because he substitutes temporarily her reality for the vision of Bathsheba. When as King of Israel he takes unto himself wives and concubines, it is because of some likeness to her that he sees in them. How can the King restrain such love, the author implies, when he at last beholds his beloved upon the housetop? In David

the King, Miss Schmitt differs from both Fisher and Ibn-Zahov. Her David is no saint; neither has he the unlovely senility of Fisher's old David. He lacks the singleness of purpose of Ibn-Zahov's hero, for he has lived a full life before Bathsheba enters it; he finds content with Abishag after Bathsheba's love has cooled. Miss Schmitt's novel is more artistic than either of the others in its balance, its well-rounded characters, and its poetic beauty.

XV. Konrad Bercovici

The Exodus, 1947

Another Old Testament novel followed David the King. With the publication in 1947 of The Exodus, the author, Konrad Bercovici, returns to the ever-popular subject of Moses. Only two years after Mrs. Wilson's Prince of Egypt he can be reasonably certain that the public will be ready again to welcome another Moses story. This author is a young Roumanian who prepared himself to be a professional musician, who spoke fluently German, French, Greek, and Calo (the language of the gypsies), and eventually won renown by writing in English. After he arrived in the United States in 1916 for a tour as a concert organist, a broken wrist from a skating accident put an end to his musical career. He remained in this country and achieved recognition as an American editor,

dramatist, short story writer, and novelist.

His retelling of the life of Moses in The Exodus is a crusade against anti-Semitism. In it the reader is conscious of a constant parallel between the senseless and vicious hatred of Raamses for the Israelites in Egypt and that of Hitler for the Jews of modern Germany. Once, almost a third of the way through the book, the author pauses to express his purpose through the teller of the tale, as Bercovici, like Asch, affirms his own Jewish faith in "the merit of Israel":

> Our intense suffering is not painted to implore pity but to show how much we have already survived, to point with pride at our great strength, to the burden we have carried! This is a tale of defiance. The voices of those who curse us grow hoarse. The hearts of those who hate us grow cold. The hangmen run out of rope. Those who have plundered us are a thousand times poorer by what they have plundered.[71]

The narrative begins four hundred years after Jacob had brought his family to Goshen upon the invitation of the friendly Pharaoh whom Joseph served. Bercovici differs from other novelists in opening the story with the rule of Raamses before the enslaving of the Israelites. Because the Jews had made certain changes in traditional musical instruments and varied from the occupational groups of

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[71] The Exodus (New York: The Beechhurst Press, 1947), pp. 76-77.

their forebears, Raamses burned their houses and enslaved their people, meanwhile appropriating their wealth and labor for purposes of state. Elaborately he proclaimed their dark designs against the government, and concluded with the shibboleth of the recent Nazi rulers: "Yea, the descendants of that Jacob are the enemies of the land." The story which follows embraces the entire life of Moses.

Bercovici makes Moses the adopted child of Pharaoh's wife (not his daughter), who, childless, loves him as her own son. She has him trained in all the skills and arts of the Egyptians so that he learns the secrets of artisans, engravers, sculptors, magicians, warriors, hunters, and wise men. His achievements with magic and ventriloquism prove especially valuable as he pleads with Pharaoh to free his people from bondage. When Moses flees to Midian after killing the Egyptian, the author varies the Old Testament story to have Aaron come there to urge him to return to deliver the Israelites from slavery. Moses, however, fails to recognize himself in the deliverer the Hebrews are awaiting: a man seven feet tall with two suns where the eyes should be and with a voice like thunder. "You are He who will lead them out of Egypt," Aaron insists.

"You are He that the hope and the tears have conceived with the covenant of the Lord."[72] Bercovici's Moses then becomes the deliverer sent from God. Even the pronouns that refer to him thereafter begin with capital letters; a light from heaven shines about him to lead the Israelites by night.

Miriam of The Exodus is a far cry from the unlovely, shrewish version of William George Hardy. Her faith never wavers. It is her courage and ingenuity, not Jochebed's, that make possible the rescue of the baby in the bulrushes. There are times when Moses doubts his high calling; Miriam never does. To his casual promise to return some day from Midian to lead his people to freedom, Miriam replies firmly: "By the living God, you will." She shields him from petty cares as he prepares the Israelites for the Exodus; she is custodian of the grain stores on the long march through the wilderness. When Moses' desert-born wife affects lordly manners, it is Miriam who tactfully tries to explain to her the democratic ways of the Hebrews. Once only, as in the Bible, she becomes officious. Yet even as the author pictures her stricken with leprosy for her presumption in berating Moses for

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[72] Ibid., p. 106.

taking an Ethiopian wife, he points to the tenderness and concern of Moses, who nurses his beloved sister back to health.

Bercovici, like Asch, makes more of Zipporah than of the Kushite (or Egyptian) wife. In his story the Kushite is only a pretty slave girl offered to Moses by the leader of an Ethiopian caravan. Zipporah of The Exodus is proud of the strong, able young man she marries--proud of his cleverness as a magician, of his skill with the bow, and of his knowledge of the Egyptian arts by which he decorates their dwelling. Gladly she extends hospitality to Aaron when he comes to Midian, until she realizes his purpose of taking Moses back to Egypt. Then, tugging and weeping, she tries to hold her husband back from his destiny. Later, when she joins Moses in Goshen, she is determined to impress the Hebrews with the fine apparel she feels appropriate for the wife of their leader. His patience exhausted, Moses finally orders her to return home to her father. Zipporah is a faithful and contented wife while Moses remains in Midian; she cannot comprehend her husband as leader and deliverer of his people. She cannot bow humbly before his greatness in the spirit of Asch's Zipporah when she says, "Is it not enough that I am called by his name, and his shadow falls on me?"

The author's interpretation of the high points of the biblical story is often original, sometimes symbolic. At times he gives a simple explanation to the apparently miraculous, as in his identification of the manna with desert mushrooms. Sea crossing Moses has Joshua supervise the construction of rafts with sails made from the canvas of the tents; then all the women and children, the cattle, and the weak and old people are transported across the water to safety on the other side. Only the soldiers under Joshua remain to fight the pursuing Egyptian army; not until the hour of battle do the waters recede for the miraculous crossing of the Hebrew fighting men. In Asch's account the whole Bnai Israel camp before the Red Sea, as Moses remains praying for their faith to cross over, for their courage to become a free people. When Korah, Dathan, and Abiram raise their voices in protest later against Moses' harsh punishment of the golden calf worshipers, Bercovici has them meet destruction, not from the biblical earthquake, but from diminution.

> And the bodies of Korach, Datah, Abiriam [Korah, Dathan, and Abiram] and his friends began to shrink even as they denounced and belittled Moshe [Moses]. And they shrank and shrank while they faced the people. And see, they were half the size of men but they didn't know it. And the people saw them shrinking until they were the size of

children. And they shrank and shrank and their voices became smaller and smaller but they didn't know it and still went on denouncing and belittling Moshe. When Miriam and Aaron looked at them they were no taller than buzzards, and while they looked at them they shrank to the size of flies. And suddenly they were no more. As if the earth had swallowed them. And a loud cry rose from the throats of tens of thousands of people.[73]

Bercovici ends the book, as does Asch, with the translation of Moses. Instead of Asch's picture of the majestic desparture of Moses for Mt. Horeb "in the full tide of glorious daylight" while all his people watched sorrowing, Bercovici has Moses lead the oldsters, who cannot enter Canaan, into battle against the King of Canaan, ranging them behind him to form a human wedge with himself at the point. Thus the survivors of the days of slavery, called by Asch "The Dead of the Wilderness," perish in battle that their children may possess the Promised Land. Leading them forward, Moses disappears into the sky.

Throughout the novel the reader is warmly aware of the personality of the storyteller. He never intrudes unpleasantly; rather, we glance up occasionally from our reading, and there he is: a kindly, wise, eloquent person who is constantly enriching the old familiar story with his wealth of human understanding and his knowledge of the ancient world. Often he addresses his reading

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[73] Ibid., pp. 259-260.

public as he calls attention to some part of the story. "Consider Moshe," he will say in his extremely informal fashion; or he will point out another detail by saying, "For see." It is his storyteller's art that creates the symbolic diminution of little men who find fault with a mighty deliverer. He himself is, as he explains, the mouthpiece of God's Chosen People:

> Those who have written The Book and I tell the same story. We are branches of the same tree. One year one branch draws more sap from the roots and the next year another one flows more sap. . . . I am the seed of Levi. Seed of the singers. Seed of the cunning. Seed of the Kings. I am of those who gather tales, as bees gather honey from the pollen of a thousand different flowers.[74]

It seems impertinent to mention one small fly in the honey of the narrative. Probably it is only a printing error, but actually it occurs twice within the story. In Moses' encounter with the Babylonian slave, the narrow-waisted, graceful lass extends her invitation in poor grammatical taste--to say the least: "Be kind to me and I will forget the man I love in Goshen. Lay down beside me. I am your slave."[75] It is, of course, entirely possible that a slave girl would have trouble with one of our

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[74] Ibid., p. 76.

[75] Ibid., p. 118.

most difficult irregular verbs. Yet, while the caravan is on the march, Moses himself gets entangled with the same verb. We read: "Then Moshe ordered that those who were at the head of the crowd should lay down and rest . . ."[76] Some further objection might be offered concerning the overemphasis on Moses' use of magic, which tends to become tiresome; his motives, however, are sound. He does not hesitate to deceive the Egyptians with conjuration; never does he delude his own people. Such minor criticisms weigh little when balanced against the real merit of the novel. With imagination and beauty the author has interpreted the great biblical scenes. With insight he pictures against the background of Egyptian oppression the plight of the twentieth-century Jew. In the Pharaoh we recognize Hitler with his dreams of empire. Out of the Egyptian passion of anti-Semitism come the same pernicious effects that have devastated modern Germany. Like Asch's Moses, Bercovici's hero is thoroughly human and thoroughly great. Though not as profound and powerful as Mann's Joseph saga and Asch's Moses, The Exodus approaches both in epic tone and literary style.

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[76] Ibid., p. 262.

The year of 1947 marked the publication of three more biblical novels: one from the Old Testament and two from the New. Norton S. Parker wrote another Joseph story called Table in the Wilderness; Mary and the Spinners by Elizabeth Frost is one of the relatively few narratives about Mary; Gladys Malvern's According to Thomas is the ever popular type of "additional gospel" novel.

XVI. Norton S. Parker

Table in the Wilderness, 1947

In Table in the Wilderness, the second Joseph book of the forties, Parker narrates Joseph's life from his youth in Hebron as favorite son of Jacob to his maturity in Egypt. At first the book gives promise of being an adventure story but develops into a novel of purpose as the author points up political and social parallels of our day. Thus when Marta, fictional sweetheart of Joseph, dies, he dedicates his life to a dream of world brotherhood. To realize and maintain this brotherhood--in Joseph's day and our own--constitute Parker's purpose in retelling the Bible story.

Two imaginary characters add romance and adventure to the Joseph epic: Marta and Sargon. Marta is a Babylonian slave girl who travels with the caravan of Sargon, a slave trader bound for Egypt. When consciousness returns to Joseph, after a furious struggle with his jealous brothers, he finds himself, also, a slave of Sargon. In the course of events, Joseph strikes his master and is condemned to death; Marta intercedes for him; Joseph rescues Sargon from desert raiders and the two men become friends. Joseph falls in love with Marta and vows to find her again when she is led away to the slave block at Memphis; Sargon later restores her to Joseph, but before they can be married the Hebrew is unjustly accused by Potiphar's wife and confined to long imprisonment; just a few days before his release Marta dies of a broken heart, believing she will never see him again; Sargon becomes the right-hand man of the Provider of all Egypt.

The second emphasis of the book, which is evidently meant to take precedence over the adventure element, is upon freedom and brotherhood. Joseph seeks freedom for himself and for all mankind. Like the Moses of Bercovici, Joseph is consumed with the passion to free the slaves--all

slaves. "Men should live as brothers," he opines, "not as master and slave. . . .The strong should not prey upon those who lack the power to defend themselves. I do not think it is God's plan that it should be so."[77] As Potiphar's steward, he effects reforms to better the conditions of the slaves that work under him. As prime minister of Egypt, he is tireless in his efforts to promote the welfare of the people. Joseph, however, is not working alone; he is a member of the Brotherhood, an elaborate organization conceived by the author to resist the aggression of the priests of Ammon. It is a secret fraternity to which the Pharaoh himself belongs. Silently it builds a power that will one day overthrow the priestly rule of tyranny and establish the freedom of man in Egypt and throughout all the world. Within this order, Joseph becomes the people's hope of deliverance, until he relinquishes this eminence with his pretended confession of guilt concerning Potiphar's wife--lest the masses revolt in anger because of his unjust punishment and bring upon themselves needless bloodshed. He is not universally under condemnation, however, for he makes a true report of the matter to the high officers of the Brotherhood. They are convinced of his

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[77]Table in the Wilderness (Chicago and New York: The Ziff-Davis Publishing Company, 1947), p. 82.

innocence and of his potentialities for leadership, and Pharaoh--himself one of the officers--later calls Joseph from prison to become the Great Provider.

In the problems of Joseph, the author recognizes important issues of today. As Provider and Viceroy of Egypt, Joseph is in a position to do untold good for the Egyptian people; the dreams of the Brotherhood are being realized. But the priests of Ammon never admit defeat. Insidiously they gather their forces to regain dominance. Freedom once gained is threatened again, but Joseph shudders at the thought of guarding that freedom with armed force. When a friend urges him to rule with an iron hand to preserve his administration against further onslaught of the opposition, Joseph protests:

> "Then I would become like every other conqueror in history. I would gain power through bloodshed and rule by force of material might!"
>
> "But you would rule justly, Joseph!"
>
> "What of the Brotherhood of Man?"
>
> "You and I will never see such a thing come to pass, not if we live a hundred years! It must remain just a magnificent ideal which we hope will be realized by more fortunate generations of the distant future, when, perhaps, men will have more sense."[78]

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[78] Ibid., pp. 434-435.

Joseph's faith grows dim. Is he after all an impractical dreamer? He watches the people become easy dupes of despots and tyrants. Are they worth deliverance? He contemplates the fury of the mob, turned now against him. As Joseph meditates in despair, the author explains the puzzling biblical allusion of the book's title:

> Was he to have such an inglorious end, wondered the Hebrew? Murdered by a mob. Destroyed by those very ones to whom he had once given freedom against slavery, food against famine. He had *provided a bountiful table in a wilderness* of want and woe. And now they were going to kill him.[79]

Still he refuses to take up arms until finally his own loved ones are threatened with destruction. All twelve sons of Judah then raise the war cry of Canaan; the huge membership of the Brotherhood rallies behind Joseph with their first use of resistance by force; leaders of the insurgents are punished; the law of reason is restored in the land. Parker is saying that freedom, once bought, must be guarded by each succeeding generation. He is weighing the cause of pacifism in the twentieth-century world. Like Joseph, he hates war; he believes that people should not fight until they are pushed. He also believes that the free world cherishes ideals of freedom they dare not lose.

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[79] *Ibid.*, p. 438. The italics are added.

Norton Parker is no warmonger. His Joseph in extremity fights because he does not know what else to do.

The style of Table in the Wilderness is uneven. The opening sentence is an uninspired composite of clichés: "The star-studded sky canopied the little valley nestled in the rugged hills of Hebron." Joseph's coat of many colors, a magnificent oriental garment in Mann's version, becomes with Parker a prosaic coat of dyed linens. Events that take two volumes to narrate in Mann's story happen with prodigious haste under Parker's pen so that on the nineteenth page Joseph awakes to find himself in the slave caravan bound for Egypt. Then, when the reader is about to lose interest in a pedestrian narrative, the action picks up sharply with the realistic account of the desert fight as the fierce black men of Shur attack the caravan and Joseph gallops off on Sargon's Assyrian stallion for help. Small blunders occasionally offend. It is confusing, for example, to find ecstasy spelled one time with sy and the next with cy; twice the author neglects, or chooses, to put his relative pronoun in the objective case. Once he speaks of "a heavy-set, grey-haired soldier who Sargon had pointed out"; again, in conversation with Joseph, the Egyptian Princess

Asenath says, "I am proud of him who I have always loved."[80] In a general way, Parker lacks artistic restraint. According to the Genesis story, Joseph prophesies the years of abundance and famine; Parker has him continue to read the future by means of astrological calculations and the ancient sacred calendar of the Grand Gallery in the Great Pyramid of Cheops. He foresees the coming of the Master Teacher, who will live exactly thirty-three years upon the earth; he predicts the World Wars that will follow nineteen hundred years after the Saviour's death! The entire novel suffers from divided purpose in the same way as does Prince of Egypt by Dorothy Clarke Wilson. Both writers portray heroes dedicated to freeing mankind from bondage; both weaken the serious intent with elements of adventure.

There are interesting differences between Parker and Mann in the interpretation of biblical characters. Mann's Potiphar, honored and respected by all, is nevertheless lacking in power because of his infant consecration to the gods as a eunuch, which becomes part of the motivation for his wife's infatuation for Joseph. Mut-em-enet, as she is called, is also dedicated to the gods and

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[80] The italics are added.

is regarded as a saint, reserved and apart from ordinary humanity. Mann reveals great art in the gradual transformation from vague awareness of Joseph to overpowering desire. Parker, on the other hand, pictures a vigorous Potiphar, who, somewhat past his prime, still ably commands the armies of Pharaoh. When Zarra, the notorious Cretan courtesan, comes to Egypt, he falls an easy prey to her charms and fatuously marries her. It is almost inevitable, therefore, that "Potiphar's wife" should perform her role in the temptation scene recorded in Genesis. One other character invites comparison. Mann's Pharaoh is a delicate seventeen-year-old, who, with a sort of otherworldliness, prefers to discuss eternal rather than temporal matters. In the background sits the queen mother with her brisk, masculine voice, smiling mockingly at Joseph yet permitting him to serve her son because she recognizes in him ability and loyalty, wisdom and honor. Parker has Pharaoh able himself to make decisions. He is affiliated with the Brotherhood and at the proper time calls Joseph forth to become prime minister. It hardly seems fair to make general comparison of a lesser author with Thomas Mann. Certainly his Joseph saga and Parker's Table in the Wilderness are written for different kinds of readers.

Mann's books are for those who have the inclination and the cultural background to appreciate four volumes of philosophical and historical interpretations of life, expounded with sound moral and spiritual insight and rare art. Parker writes for the reader who may be also concerned with serious matters but who is not averse to exchanging philosophy and literary excellence for a dash of melodrama.

XVII. Elizabeth H. Frost

Mary and the Spinners, 1947

The scene of the next biblical novel of 1947 shifts from the Old Testament to the New. Its author, Elizabeth Hollister Frost, exemplifies her belief that a novel is a mixture of fantasy and reason in her story of the Virgin Mary, called Mary and the Spinners. Realistic in detail, it is a fantasy based on the widely-held notion of the catalepsy of all things that took place at the moment of Jesus' birth. At this moment each of Mary's five girlhood friends faces the turning point of her life. All of the girls, with Mary, have served as Temple spinners at Jerusalem. When their service is completed, they return to

their homes; the author narrates the life of each one separately, bringing each story to a climax at the moment of Jesus' birth. Through her friends, Mary is seen obliquely. As the snapping of the ancient bridge in Thornton Wilder's The Bridge of San Luis Rey (1927) joins the lives of the five who are flung into the gulf below, so the relationship of the spinners to Mary gives unity to Mrs. Frost's episodic plot.

Five girls--Rebecca, Sephora, Suzanna, Abigea, and Cael--have been sent, with Mary, to learn to spin in the Temple at Jerusalem. Supervised by the devout widow Arbela, they have made the Temple veils and the girdles for the priests. On the Day of Departure they are chosen by lot to make the ceremonial silks and linens: the gold, the blue, the white, the scarlet, and the purple. Each color is rich in religious symbolism. Mary, like her counterpart in Robert Graves' King Jesus, is selected for the crowning task: spinning the purple thread. She it is, the youngest and the least, who remembers to wave good-by to Arbela. "She is full of grace," sighs the old woman, grieving to see her leave. The girls go their way.

Rebecca marries, but no children are born to bless her home. Unable to endure her childlessness, she fashions

a child in her mind and presents her problem to Jehovah with matter-of-fact directness:

"I said to You," she starts, "in the beginning, 'Give me children, or else I die.'"

"That is true," says Jehovah, looking out of Heaven's door.

"I said to Jahli, also, 'Give me children or else I die.'"

"I heard you often," replies Jehovah, "whispering in the bed in the upper room."

"I said to the God Lakhmu even, licking the milk which gathers in the cave wall, 'I will worship you gladly if you will give me a son.'"

"That was not circumspect of you," says Jehovah, "as I said in Exodus."

"I even put a honey cake under the Tammuz tree by the threshing floor."

"You did," says Jehovah," and I sent a fox to eat it up."

"And when you and Mahli and Lakhmu and Rachel--and a stranger I forgot to speak about--none of you gave me children, when I was quite desperate, I made a child with my mind."

"How did you do that?" says Israel's God.

"Thinking about him," says Rebecca . . .

"But he wasn't really there?" says Israel's God.

"Oh, yes," says Rebecca, "things which are not there are plainer than things which are. When a woman wants something enough she is irresistible."

"I have noticed that," says Gabriel, looking out of a window of heaven."

"She is not stopped even by a lion in the way . . . A woman must have children or else--she dies."[81]

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[81]Mary and the Spinners (New York: Coward-McCann, Inc., 1947), pp. 49-50.

Then Rebecca climbs the parapet above the lion pit and raises the knife to end her life. In astonishment she feels her hand stayed, her fall suspended; the sheep remain poised in the field; the current of the river ceases to flow. A man calls for help, and Rebecca hurries with him to a stable. There she beholds the Christ Child, born to redeem the world, and in gladness she runs to spread the news.

Susanna, too, is born for sorrow. So beautiful that even her mother is jealous of her, she is the toast of the countryside; every man in Jerusalem with a marriageable son regrets that he himself was born too soon. One dark day when Susanna's father is away on a journey, her mother forces her to marry an old priest with "a bad breath, a fine house, and a hundred slaves." What wonder, therefore, that she responds to the love of a younger man so that when Jesus is born she is at the place of stoning to suffer for her sin? But the stones falter and stand transfixed in the air, to fall meekly at last on the starlit snow.

Abigea loves a man of the house of Heth, to the distress of her Hebrew mother, who fears that the Canaanite worship will demand the death of her daughter's firstborn. In terror the girl watches her husband's growing determination to fulfill his religious obligation. The Jewish

servants of the household advance to thwart his madness, moving in like bodyguards to protect the child. In spite of them, the father raises his arm to strike--and the motion of the world in that moment is suspended. The devil of fanaticism is expelled in the holy hush, and peace returns.

Sometimes the great moment comes in days of gladness. It is at such a time that Cael welcomes home her husband from war and the orphan Sephora receives her first kiss of love: in that moment when all things are driven from their courses and the Infant King is born.

Years afterward, when the Temple spinners are mature women, they return to Jerusalem for reunion. Five gather early to dance again the spinning dance; then each relates the most important moment of her life. As they discover that all the significant events took place at the moment when the bright star shone, slow understanding dawns upon them and they begin to tremble. They look up to see Mary coming toward them, and they remember how every Jewish girl has longed to bear the Messiah. Mary's Son must be nearly thirty now.

"Things like that do not happen to people you know," said Abigea . . .

"But suppose," said Rebecca, turning her undefeated eyes from one to the other, giving each a strange, grave, splendid look, drawing out the last thread and laying down the distaff--

"Suppose it is true?"[82]

In nearly all biblical novels about Jesus, Mary is also pictured. Sometimes she is a minor character as in Murphy's The Scarlet Lily and Mrs. Wilson's The Brother; occasionally she carries the title role as in Asch's Mary. Murphy portrays her as the white lily, pure and holy. With her own hands she performs miracles; sinless herself, she rescues sinners. Mrs. Wilson's Mary is kind and loving but too submissive for the greatness expected of the mother of Jesus. Asch pictures her tenderly and fully, from demure girlhood in Nazareth to magnificent motherhood when love for suffering humanity transcends earthly sorrow. Mrs. Frost, in a little book less than half the size of Asch's Mary, suggests indirectly the same beautiful spirit. Quiet and thoughtful, Mary goes about her work in the Temple. She helps the newcomer; she comforts the sick; she remembers to thank Arbela for her care; she is chosen to weave the purple thread. Years later, when her friends are in distress, they think of Mary in their need. Mrs. Frost has written, as

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[82] Ibid., pp. 190-191.

she says, a fantasy--a Christmas fantasy. In it she has mirrored, in the lives of Mary's friends, the beauty and grace of Jesus' mother.

XVIII. Gladys Malvern

According to Thomas, 1947

The next New Testament novel of 1947 turns from Jesus' mother to the story of his public ministry. In naming her book According to Thomas, Gladys Malvern uses the exact title chosen by the Russian I. F. Nazhivin in 1931 for a similar narrative. In accordance with her intention not "to distort or to change in the slightest the immortal message of the Holy Scriptures," Miss Malvern has added neither fictional characters nor imaginary incidents. Her plot, therefore, has no romantic love story or unnecessary adornment. She portrays Thomas as a young man, because, as she says, to her "his own words reveal youth--youth that questions, youth with its ardent desire to get things clear and to get things right, youth in its earnestness, its groping, and in its search for solidity." Instead of endowing him with the cold skepticism frequently associated with "doubting Thomas," she makes him an eager, earnest, lovable young person, who becomes one of the intimate followers of Jesus.

Thomas, in Miss Malvern's novel, is old and about to die a martyr's death when he writes his gospel. He uses the first person to relate the scenes as they unfold in his memory, and ends his story with an account of the fate of the early Christian leaders who went forth to preach in obedience to the Great Commission. The author uses the traditional sources for the record of their far-flung triumphs and sacrifices, dwelling especially upon the three who are central in Thomas' narrative: Joseph of Arimathea, who journeyed to Britain and whose staff took root on Wearyall Hill to become the Glastonbury Thorn; Lazarus, whose bloom of manhood never faded after his resurrection from the dead; and Thomas himself, who carried the gospel to Syria, India, and Persia. Most of the account, however, concerns the experiences of the young man Thomas during the years of Jesus' public ministry.

Miss Malvern first presents Thomas as a lad of thirteen, sent from Antioch by his father to study Jewish law in Jerusalem, there to live with the family friend Joseph of Arimathea until a rabbi can be chosen to teach him. The selection of a rabbi is described as a serious matter. Three years pass and almost a third of the book is completed before Thomas attaches himself to the little brotherhood who follow

the Galilean Rabbi. Both Thomas and Joseph go out to hear John of the Wilderness. There are fire and power in his call to repentance, but the attention of Thomas is fixed upon the young Carpenter who accepts John's baptism. He watches Jesus and listens to his teaching during the wedding festivities in Cana, all the while drawing nearer to him in spirit. When Jesus invites him into the group, Thomas joyously responds, "I have found my rabbi!"

Primary interest centers in the relation of Thomas to Jesus. It is only gradually that Thomas comes to his belief in Jesus as Saviour. At first he feels no more than admiration for a great rabbi, but when he sees Jesus barely escape death at the hands of the Nazarene mob, Thomas realizes that his admiration has grown into love. The other disciples begin to believe Jesus the Messiah. Thomas haltingly confesses his doubts to Joseph: "I believe he is a wonderful teacher. But Messiah? I only wish I could believe it."[83] Living with the Rabbi daily and witnessing his deeds, Thomas doubts no longer; he restrains himself with difficulty from shouting along the highway: "This is he! This is He that should come!"[84] Yet his trust is in a Messiah of earthly

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[83] According to Thomas (New York: Robert M. McBride and Company, 1947), p. 106.

[84] Ibid., p. 149.

glory, a trust that crumbles at Golgotha. He scoffs afterward at the Resurrection stories, and stands aloof and unsmiling before his companions as they return from their walk to Emmaus. "Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, I will not believe," he tells them, according to the gospel narrative. Then, in a scene reminiscent of Van Tassel Sutphen's Nathanael as he meets the Risen Lord, Thomas simply and directly relates his own similar experience.

> There he was in the middle of the room in his long white robe. And he was smiling at us just as he used to do. There he was--tangible, whole, straight of shoulder, unimpaired, overflowing with abundant life, the triumphant One, the risen Christ.
>
> "Peace," he said. "Peace be unto you."
>
> I sat up, staring. He turned, looking full at me.
>
> "Thomas," he called gently.
>
> I rose from my mat and approached him.
>
> "Reach out your finger. See my hands. Reach out your hand and thrust it into my side--and do not be faithless, but believing."
>
> "My Lord!" I cried. "My Lord--and--my God!"[85]

There is nothing profound in Miss Malvern's comparatively brief retelling of the last years of Jesus. The biblical characters are only slightly expanded, and grouped so that relatives and friends fit comfortably into the outlines

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[85] Ibid., p. 264.

of a continuous narrative. The author, for instance, has Thomas a frequent visitor at Bethany in the home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus so that he can naturally be present at the biblical events that concern these three close friends of Jesus. His membership in the Twelve, of course, enables Thomas to accompany his Rabbi throughout the countryside and in Jerusalem. Pleasantly straightforward, _According to Thomas_ is a sympathetic expansion of the New Testament story with a special appeal to youthful readers.

Sutphen, in his gospel told by Nathanael, makes the narrator, rather than Doubting Thomas, the one who finds it hard to believe in Jesus as the Messiah. His Thomas is a Tiberian merchant, who deals in dried and salted fish for exportation to western markets. A heavy-set man of forty-five years, he learns to know Jesus through his purchase of fish from Andrew and Peter. The biblical episode of his touching the wounds of Jesus is related briefly at the proper time; interest is centered, however, in Nathanael's lack of belief and his final faith. Thus Nathanael, not Thomas, is the counterpart of Miss Malvern's Thomas. It is strange that there are not more Thomas narratives with a dramatic conflict inherent in the hero's very name.

The last two biblical novels published in the decade of the forties are LeGette Blythe's Bold Galilean (1948) and James Wesley Ingles' A Woman of Samaria (1949). Although both are based on the New Testament, they suggest the wide range of subject matter possible in this type of fiction. Blythe adds one more book to the dozens written about Jesus; Ingles' leading character is a woman whose name is unknown.

XIX. LeGette Blythe

Bold Galilean, 1948

Various novelists have related the story of Jesus from the viewpoint of Roman soldiers on duty in Jerusalem at the time of his Passion. Such a book is Bold Galilean by LeGette Blythe, North Carolina newspaper man. Blythe followed in 1950 with a second biblical novel called A Tear for Judas, in which Judas Iscariot is represented as being more misguided than deliberately erring in the betrayal of his Lord.

Bold Galilean is the account of the last two years of Jesus' life as it is seen primarily by three Romans: Centurion Gaius Semphronius, who is known in the Bible as the one who helped build the Jewish synagogue at Capernaum

and whose great faith was commended by Jesus as he healed the Centurion's servant; Marcus Calpurnius Lupinus, a Roman senator's son--once a playboy but now the successful operator of dyeworks, weaving plants, and glassworks in Phoenicia; and Tribune Lucius Mallius Galba, recently appointed to assist Pontius Pilate in the thankless task of keeping the stubborn Jews in subjection to Roman rule. Three times the three Romans meet; these occasions indicate the growing intensity of the drama in progress about them. Each of the three, in his own way, comes to believe in Jesus.

The first scene in Tyre serves as an introduction to the three men. Gaius, beloved by the townsfolk of Capernaum, is the warmhearted idealist whose kindliness embraces all humanity. With a heart already open to the exalted Jewish concept of God, he is ready to welcome the teaching of the Nazarene. Marcus, owner of shops and factories, sees in the Jews "a smelly, fussy, loud people," who interest him only in the capacity of purchasers for his commodities. "Money's power," he boasts. "Give me money and I'll buy anything I want." Lucius, the third of the trio, is the stolid Roman soldier who obeys without complication of conscience. He glories in the Roman rule when he says: "I find

it neither difficult nor distasteful to clout skulls when they get themselves in the way of Roman legionaries. In fact, I rather relish it."[86] There is foreshadowing in their statement of purpose, for Marcus is to be smitten with leprosy, whose cure money cannot buy; Lucius is to find himself shaken in the performance of Roman orders at Golgotha.

The second meeting takes place at Herod's birthday banquet, in Machaerus. There in the Peraean wastelands above the Dead Sea the three friends are guests of the Tetrarch in a celebration designed to dazzle all eyes with its magnificence. Herod plans as a gesture of magnanimity to release the prisoner John from his dungeon cell; he is circumvented, however, by his wife and her daughter, who, at the bidding of Herodias, dances before the ruler and demands as reward the Baptist's head on a platter. Salome is uninhibited by remorse as is Henry Denker's dancer in Salome: Princess of Galilee (1952). Blythe's Salome is "a vicious, unfeeling, cold-blooded snake" who picks up a fig, leans forward across the table, and with her pretty ringed fingers wedges it between the teeth of the severed head.

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[86] Bold Galilean (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1948), p. 9.

The three friends gather together for the third time at Golgotha just after the Crucifixion. The Centurion, long since a devoted follower of the Nazarene, is bowed in grief; through faith he is able to penetrate the mystery of the Cross, at least in part, as he replies to Marcus' cry of bewilderment. "Perhaps he could have saved himself, Marcus," says the Centurion. "Perhaps he has saved himself."[87] But Marcus, recently restored by Jesus from leprosy--that one disease from whose hideous ravages no money could deliver him--cannot be comforted. He levels an accusing finger at Lucius, who, under Roman orders, has directed the Crucifixion, and says to him: "You killed the noblest man I have ever known. You, Tribune, you . . . killed a god."[88] Lucius answers quietly, "I know it. . . . This man . . . was of a truth more than just a man."[89]

Marcus' development of leprosy is the fictional element that ties the imaginary characters most dramatically to the biblical story. It is the inevitable touch of dramatic irony rebounding upon the man who has claimed that his money is omnipotent. A powerful scene occurs when Marcus, after Bar Abbas has robbed and beaten him on

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[87] Ibid., p. 301.

[88] Ibid., p. 302.

[89] Ibid.

the perilous Jericho road, awakes to find the lepers have claimed him for their own. He has never before admitted, even to himself, the significance of the suspicious gray spots on his body, the appalling areas of skin where sense has become deadened, the falling eyebrows. A squat, shrunken leper with a gnomelike head is speaking to him as he wakes:

> Calm yourself. . . . After all there are compensations. Having reached the bottom, one can sink no lower. Having drained the dregs, one can taste no more bitterness from the cup. When all is lost, there remains no longer the fear of losing. We have come upon peace--the peace of the utterly lost. . . . Welcome to our desolate company.[90]

When Marcus comes at last to Jesus for healing, he, with his emaciated companions, form the group of ten lepers described in the New Testament, and Marcus is that grateful one who returns to kneel in thanksgiving before his benefactor.

Blythe experiments in an objective presentation of Jesus. He gives a realistic description of his masuline strength, his robust frame, his "sandy reddish hair burned by the summer sun." He invents conversations and applies the stream-of-consciousness device in the analysis of the thoughts passing through the mind of Jesus as he

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[90] Ibid., pp. 156-159.

sets his face steadfastly to go to Jerusalem. This portrayal is reverent and straightforward but less successful than his more indirect suggestion. A description of the effect of Jesus' preaching and personality and mighty deeds upon the various characters becomes, in Blythe's hands, a surer method of interpretation of the Bold Galilean.

In recent years three other biblical novels about Jesus have been written from the viewpoint of Roman soldiers: Lloyd Douglas' The Robe (1942), which has already been discussed; The Lance of Longinus (1946) by Prince Hubertus zu Loewenstein; and Francesco Perri's The Unknown Disciple (1950). The two last mentioned come to us by translation from Europe: Loewenstein's novel from the German and Perri's from the Italian. With the scholarly background of a historian, Loewenstein draws upon legendary sources to supplement sacred and secular record. His main character is Longinus, traditionally known as that Roman soldier who was redeemed by the blood of Jesus, spilled upon him as he pierced the side of the Saviour on the Cross. The incident becomes the climax of Loewenstein's story. The lance of Longinus, now claimed as a sacred relic in the Vatican, is described at length and supposedly improved for fictional

purposes by the addition of a trick device whereby "in a split second, by pressing two buttons, it could be elongated to three times its length." In the end Longinus faces death in a prisoner's cell for forsaking his post of duty to go to Golgotha; he entrusts his lance to a friend to take to Rome, where it may be cherished among the treasures of the State.

Perri relies less on legend and more on romantic invention. He makes use of banishment, identical likeness, shipwreck, robbers, rape, even a frightful ride for the heroine while tied, naked and dying, to the back of a horse which flees in terror from hungry jackals at its heels. In this thrilling, if melodramatic, tale the hero is the Roman soldier Marcus, natural child of a Jewish mother and a Roman soldier. His first military assignment in Palestine is to destroy the Zealot band headed by an unknown Amazon, who, by marvelous coincidence, is his own mother. For bungling the affair he is dishonorably discharged from the Roman army; his recognition of Jesus as the Messiah is more than recompense to him. With his father's inheritance, Marcus becomes the Rich Young Man of the Gospel; he is also that Unknown Disciple who runs away at the arrest of his Master, leaving his garment in the hands of the soldiers. He is the first to witness the

Resurrection and the first Christian martyr to die. When compared with the extravagant plot complexities of Perri, the legendary additions of Loewenstein, and the colorful symbolism of The Robe, Blythe's Bold Galilean seems a sober narrative. Without claim to brilliance or great art, the author realizes a forthright, sincere interpretation of Jesus through the eyes of the three Roman witnesses.

XX. James Wesley Ingles

A Woman of Samaria, 1949

For the last biblical novel of the forties, A Woman of Samaria, James Wesley Ingles has chosen for his subject the Samaritan woman with whom Jesus spoke at the well. Their meeting was brief; yet it was of sufficient duration to stimulate Ingles to pursue her story further. A woman's experiences with six men, remarks Bradford Smith jestingly, "is matter enough for any novelist!"[91] Ingles develops the thesis that his heroine is not necessarily a woman of low character. Let us suppose, he suggests, that circumstances beyond her control have changed her life from

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[91]"A Woman with Six Men," Saturday Review of Literature, XXXII (June 11, 1949), 14.

its original promise of simple contentment. What, then, can have happened that she should marry five men and live with a sixth who was not her husband?

The book falls easily into the divisions telling of the men in the life of Photina, as the author calls her. Through her life with these men--Samaritans, Jew, Roman, and Greek--Ingles manages by his choice of nationalities to give a cross section of life in the time of Jesus. The first five chapters are named for the five husbands, the sixth concerns the Roman who was not her husband, and the seventh pictures the influence of the Messiah on Photina and her family.

Photina's marriage to her Samaritan neighbor was, as the author describes it, idyllic. No irregularity or undue haste marred its perfection. Young love prompted this union, which continued with increasing happiness until that day when robbers waylaid Manasseh her husband, leaving him dead by the roadside. But for this disaster, Ingles implies, Photina might have lived and died a happy Samaritan matron. With her husband's death, however, the joy of life departed from her, never to return in its fullness again.

Although the love of husband and wife had been deep and complete, the author has made Photina afraid of a danger that now threatened her. Manasseh's brother Phineas coveted

her. Once during her husband's absence she had been forced to flee to her father's home for protection. Photina knew the Mosaic law whereby the nearest of kin should marry a man's childless widow to raise children to bear the name of the deceased, and she now saw with loathing that she could no longer escape yielding to Phineas. That he already had a wife did not deter him; Photina should be his concubine. Was it not her sacred obligation to conform to the law, coldly inquired her mother-in-law, prodding her as with a goad. Photina accepted the inevitable, but she could not long endure this man's alternating passion and cruelty. In imploring the aid of Rabbi Elishama to secure for her a divorce, she unwittingly exposed herself to direct attack from Phineas, who, working shrewdly and in haste, surprised the pair in consultation and divorced her for scandalous conduct.

Ingles has as her third husband none other than kind, fatherly Elishama. Shunned by society, to whom else could Photina turn? And the rabbi judged himself not unfortunate, even under the weight of popular censure. He fervently intended to be only as a father to her but found himself unable to resist the appeal of her extraordinary beauty; the shock of breaking his lifelong self-control caused a stroke, from which he never recovered. Photina,

for her part, never loved him but cared for him faithfully, out of pity and gratitude for his protection.

Meanwhile a rich Jewish merchant named Nathan was in the offing, waiting for his opportunity. He had been sending gifts of wine and food to the impoverished couple, thus continually putting Photina under obligation to him. At Elishama's death she therefore found a fourth husband ready to share his wealth with her. Although she could not return Nathan's love, she delighted in presiding as mistress of a large household, with Nathan proud to display her as his choice possession. This did not last: her failure to give him an heir resulted in divorce.

While she was still married to Nathan, a dashing Roman soldier entered the story, to dazzle Photina with his sudden and determined bid for her affections. For the first time the author has her break her marital vows. She found the Roman's ardor irresistible, however heavily she suffered for the sin of her disloyalty. But when Nathan divorced her, the Roman Marius was far away, and she had to return for a time to the home of her brother. It was not long, however, until she renewed acquaintance with a childhood playmate, the Greek potter's son Apollodorus. Apollodorus had always loved her and so became Husband Number Five. With him Photina found the nearest thing to

contentment she had known since the death of Manasseh: she bore him a son. But Marius returned, and Apollodorus, learning of his wife's inconstancy, slipped away one day with their child to his native land. Marius remained, and Photina bore him a son.

It is at this moment in the narrative that the author has Photina meet Jesus at the well, where for the first time she saw life in its true perspective. From that day she tried to put her spiritual house in order.

Ingles makes Marius the Roman soldier who superintended the Crucifixion, and has him, too, feel the saving grace of the Master. Photina's first son, grown to manhood, returns from Greece with a word of forgiveness from his now deceased father. The young man himself later accepts Christianity under the influence of Paul's preaching in Athens.

In A Woman of Samaria Ingles has elected to pursue an exceedingly difficult subject. Chaucer developed it centuries ago in the account of the buxom Wife of Bath in the Canterbury pilgrimage. Defoe used the same plot to relate the naughty story of Moll Flanders. The surprising feat accomplished by Ingles is his dignified control of situations which could so easily have got out of hand. His sympathetic treatment saves Photina from coarseness.

There is no unusual merit in the portrayal of character or biblical backgrounds. On the other hand, the sensational events used to expand the brief biographical data of the New Testament do not exclude a sincere, though not intense, religious appeal.

Early in the fifties, Paul Fox wrote a biblical novel entitled The Daughter of Jairus (1951), which may be compared on several counts with Ingles' narrative. Both authors have chosen heroines mentioned in the New Testament, but not named. Both young women are introduced there in most extraordinary circumstances: one has had five husbands; the other is raised from the dead. Little further is known about either of them, so that the authors are at liberty to do what they please with fictional enlargement. No other novels except the ones under discussion have apparently been written about them. Fox calls Jairus' daughter Naomi and gives her a fierce, untamed spirit, inherited from her cold, scornful, rich father. Filled with the indistinct fears and longings of adolescence, she leaves home. As she sits in a lonely place to rest, she is stung by a Galilean scorpion, as deadly as a Texas rattlesnake, and dies. When Jesus raises her from the dead, her turbulent spirit is calmed before his serenity. She learns to love her fellow man and is even able to forgive

Judas at last for his betrayal of Jesus. Like Ingles, Fox has unusual ability in portraying the thought processes of his heroine. Neither of the novelists has written a profound book; both manifest sincerity without burdening their stories with sentimentality.

CHAPTER IV

THE PHENOMENON OF THE BIBLICAL NOVEL

This survey of the historical development of the biblical novel and the more particular study of the genre during the forties make certain trends evident. We can note what authors have written books, what subjects and what fictional devices they have chosen, the increase and decrease of publication by decades and the relationship of the novels to the contemporary social and political scene. Finally we can attempt an explanation of the amazing popularity of scriptural novels with the American public.

The register of authors of biblical fiction offers a veritable cross section of life: preachers and preachers' wives, soldiers, lawyers, painters, doctors, teachers, poets, dramatists, novelists, and housewives. Some have written but one novel, thereafter retiring from the literary scene. Others have continued with repeated offerings in the field. It is of interest to observe how many writers of established reputation have delved, at least once, into the possibilities

of fictional enlargement of portions of the Bible. Among them are Anatole France, Gustave Flaubert, and Leonid Andreev; of John Erskine, Lewis Browne, Elmer Davis, Robert Graves, D. H. Lawrence, Irving Bacheller, George Moore, Ralph Connor, John Oxenham, Arthur Train, Louis Untermeyer, Opie Read, and Thomas Costain. To various lands we reach out for more biblical novels, translate them into English, and are scarcely aware that they are borrowed. The largest number seem to come from the German with a generous yield from the French and Russian; additional volumes are translated from Arabic, Danish, Dutch, Hebrew, Italian, Norwegian, Polish, Spanish, Swedish, and Yiddish.

As to subjects chosen, it is apparent that favorite characters emerge through the years, appearing so frequently that it is astonishing how popular interest in them remains undimmed. As would be expected, there have been more novels about the life of Jesus than about any other scriptural figure. In one sense all novels with New Testament scenes must reckon primarily with him, whatever other developments the author may introduce for narrative purposes. Next to Jesus, Moses has received the most attention, with more than twice as

many novels written about him as about any other biblical character. His popularity has remained fairly steady from Ingraham's The Pillar of Fire (1859) to Southon's On Eagles' Wings (1954). The frequent appearance of Moses books is undoubtedly due to the fact that both Christians and Jews look to him as Lawgiver and Prophet. From Jewish writers like Edmond Fleg, Louis Untermeyer, Konrad Bercovici, and Sholem Asch have come interpretations of Moses, enriched by the authors' cultural and religious heritage.

David has been the third favorite subject of biblical fiction. In many ways Gladys Schmitt's novel, David the King, is the outstanding narrative among the eleven books featuring David as hero. Roark Bradford's Ol' King David and the Philistine Boys is the most original in treatment. David usually appears as a minor character in the seven Solomon stories. In most of the novels dealing with Solomon, the writers make full use of legendary materials, often raising the Queen of Sheba to the rank of a major character. Two Old Testament men tie for the fourth choice of biblical subject: Joseph and Ahab, or rather Ahab-and-Jezebel. Thomas Mann's Joseph saga helps swell the number of Joseph books; none of the other

Joseph authors have contributed work of unusual importance. The Ahab-Jezebel narratives are numerous but of lesser consequence in the general development of the genre. During the latter part of the nineteenth century and the first decade of the twentieth, seven novels about Daniel were published. Since then, however, no writer has attempted his re-creation. In an equal number of books various novelists have dealt with the Maccabaean era, from Strauss' Helon's Pilgrimage to Jerusalem (1824) to Howard Fast's My Glorious Brothers (1948).

Of the New Testament men, Paul has an easy lead with twelve fictional interpretations, which have been rather evenly distributed over a period from 1877 to 1952. Judas, with half as many novels, has been next in popularity as a fictional hero, probably because of the possibilities latent in the sharp contrast between him and the one whom he betrays. Two other characters, Pilate and Herod, have been almost equally in demand. Outside the Christian circle, they and their wives have been drawn into the drama of Holy Week sufficiently to form the nucleus of stirring biblical narratives.

Mary Magdalen has a comfortable margin of popularity among biblical heroines. The ten novels concerning

her have all been published within the twentieth century, three of them in the fifties. Only half as many have centered about Mary, the mother of Jesus. It is probably easier to make an interesting picture of a sinful woman than it is of one who is wholly good, as the headlines of the morning paper will testify. Esther has been the second choice of the novelists, four of the seven books about her having been published within the fifties.

The authors of biblical novels have used all sorts of fictional devices in presenting their materials, ranging from the comparatively simple epistolary method of Ingraham and the frequent "additional gospel" type of story to the elaborate framework of the Wandering Jew legend, used in its most complex arrangement in Asch's The Nazarene. Sometimes the biblical narrative becomes a tale of romance and adventure, as in Stuart's Caravan for China and Slaughter's The Galileans. In the hands of Mann, the Joseph saga is set upon a foundation of profound philosophy; Andreev has created psychological studies that border on the psychopathic; Lagerkvist's Barabbas is concerned almost wholly with what takes place within the mind of the protagonist. The novels of the twenties illustrate

the naturalistic interpretation of their biblical source; during the forties there is an increasing tendency to pose modern problems against the scriptural background and seek a solution for the issues of our day. With regard to setting, archeological discoveries are suggesting a fictional treatment of the almost prehistoric era of Abraham. Some writers deliberately select subjects and incidents only briefly mentioned in the Bible. As in Mrs. Wilson's The Herdsman and Oxenham's The Hidden Years, they may choose that portion of the hero's life about which nothing has been recorded and hence are free to create as they see fit. Like Moore and Lawrence, they may change biblical events and yet remain within their prerogative as novelists. They may cast the entire story in Negro dialect and produce the delightful humor of Zora Hurston and Roark Bradford.

In some respects the biblical novel reflects the contemporary social and political factors. One would not look for wide publication of any sort of novels in the early days of America with its ever-widening frontier to the West and with the years of internal conflict followed by the reconstruction era. Thus the eight biblical novels before 1860 represent the expected output in relation to

the general production of fiction. Toward the end of the nineteenth century, however, when the novel began coming into its own in our country, the four biblical narratives of the sixties practically doubled in number in the succeeding decade, doubled again in the eighties and a third time in the nineties. Aside from the increasing popularity of fiction among our people, there seems to be no particular explanation for the large number of biblical narratives that poured from the press in the first decade of the present century, when for the first time the yield was more than forty. The sudden drop to thirteen novels in the 1910-1919 decade must reflect the tense concern of the war years, when the global conflict left little time or desire for the making of tales. The next thirty years maintained a steady production of about forty biblical novels every decade; the tone of the books, however, suggests a reflection of contemporary events.

With the advent of World War I, we became rudely aware of unpleasant reality. Enormous technical and scientific advances unsettled our comfortable belief in inevitable benevolent progress. To many, faith in the future and the optimism of Coué seemed like mockery, and biblical novelists, like writers in the general field of

fiction, were prone to defy the old hopes in a naturalistic approach to their subjects. Thus during the twenties came such books as Washburn's Samson, Erskine's Adam and Eve, and Davis' Giant Killer. The same tone continued in some of the novels of the thirties, although in general a more serious note was sounded as the years of depression awoke a need for spiritual strength, a desire to read about people who triumph over troubles. With the forties came a more specific examination of contemporary problems as seen in the framework of the biblical setting. Asch is concerned with the tolerant understanding and mutual respect of Jew and Christian; Mann defies Hitler's nihilism in Tables of the Law; Mrs. Wilson pleads for social justice in The Herdsman; Fineman defends the rights of the foreign-born in Ruth. Problematic interpretations continue in the fifties with such books as Fisher's fight against superstition in The Valley of Vision and Pär Lagerkvist's wrestling in Barabbas with the whole idea of the gospel of love and eternal life.

The thirty-four biblical novels of the first four years of the fifties, the largest number ever to be published in so short a period, invite a prediction for the future of the genre. On the basis of past performance,

one feels reasonably sure of the continuing popularity of biblical fiction. From a publisher's viewpoint, Frederich Melcher maintains that when the natural appeal of biblical heroes is added to the crisis of a war that stirs people to their depths, there is a ready-made audience waiting to read stories of past crises as they search for present guidance and clues to a "new salvation for distraught civilization."[1] Gone are the days, explains Harrison Smith, when a man may look to science alone to ameliorate human suffering or discover the essence of the mind and soul; man is searching again for spiritual guidance, and the wide-spread popularity of the religious novel in our day bears evidence of his "desire to examine and understand men who live by the spirit."[2] There is reason to conclude that the flourishing of the biblical novel, especially in the last three decades, bears close relationship to the experience of fighting three wars that have failed to establish peace and good will, to the ominous threat of

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[1]"The Day of the Religious Novel," Publishers Weekly, CXLV (February 19, 1944), 859.

[2]"The Novel Goes to Church," Saturday Review of Literature, XXXIII (June 24, 1950), 22.

advancing Communistic atheism, and to the terrifying strides of science which threaten the annihilation of mankind. The basic problems of life are abiding, as Thomas Mann demonstrates in the Joseph saga. Man must make his peace with himself, with his neighbor, and with his God; he reads the books in quest of answers for his needs.

Thoughtful people continue to remind us of the foolishness of applying the fancy dress of fiction to the Bible, which on its own terms is better literature than any of the imaginary enlargements. Nevertheless, biblical novels remain, as they have been from their genesis, best-sellers. The fascination of the familiar, the unsurpassed drama inherent in the stories, the infinite variety of character and situation, the moral and spiritual impact--all comprise an irresistible appeal to the novelist and his public. As long as the reader finds adequate guidance for living within the pages of the Bible, he will probably continue to enjoy a fictional report on life based on the characters and events from the Old and New Testaments.

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A P P E N D I X I

THE *JOSEPH* SAGA OF THOMAS MANN

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VIII. Evaluation of the tetralogy

No study of the biblical novel would be adequate without consideration of the Joseph saga of Thomas Mann. Only one of the four books comprising the tetralogy falls within the decade of the forties, but they must be taken as parts of a whole. Mann's connection with America has been close in recent years but not close enough to classify him as an American author. His works come to us by translation from the German. The fact remains, however, that other biblical fiction is invariably measured by Mann's books for literary excellence; hence they are presented in the appendix as a necessary part of the development of the biblical novel.

Thomas Mann always thought of himself as non-political, even as he watched with perturbation the rise to power of Adolph Hitler in his homeland; then he was barred suddenly from Germany when he gave answer in 1936 to a literary critic who advocated anti-Semitism. This unexpected separation of Mann from his books and papers made it necessary for his daughter Erika surreptitiously to return to Munich to rescue the unfinished Joseph manuscripts. Three years later he made application for naturalization papers in the United States and has since made his home in this country.

Several circumstances prompted Mann to write the Joseph story, originally planned as a novella. As a boy he had become interested in Egyptian culture; perhaps the childhood enthusiasm was made more intense by a request in 1926 for him to write an introduction for a set of pictures depicting the life story of Joseph. Somewhere through the years he had read Goethe's statement that the biblical account of Joseph was charming but too brief and that "one is tempted to carry it out in all its detail." Thus at last Mann wove into a pattern the various threads of interest, and, after working for sixteen years on the grand undertaking, he presented the public with what Henry Hatfield calls a story of "typical and timeless figures against a more or less distinct background."[1]

International humanity speaks from the pages of the Joseph books: Joseph and His Brothers (1934), Young Joseph (1935), Joseph in Egypt (1938), and Joseph the Provider (1944). They are the product of the author's maturity and may be understood as his considered message to mankind. They are frankly didactic and bolstered with philosophy. According to his own admission in a lecture delivered in 1936, he subjects his characters to psychoanalysis:

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[1]Thomas Mann (New York: Vail-Ballou Press, 1951), p. 96.

> Indeed it would be too much to say that I came to psychoanalysis. It came to me. Through the friendly interest of some younger workers in the field for what I had written, from Little Herr Friedemann to Death in Venice, The Magic Mountain and the Joseph novels, it gave me to understand that in my way I "belonged"; it made me aware, as probably behooved it, of my own latent, preconscious sympathies; and when I began to occupy myself with the literature of psychoanalysis I recognized, arrayed in the ideas and the language of scientific exactitude, much that had long been familiar to me through my youthful mental experiences.[2]

The experiences of his characters are, however, less personal than racial; they become universal as they link the individual to his forefathers and to the generations yet unborn. Actually Mann is telling the story of Everyman. All that happens is part of God's divine plan. Joseph, and all the rest of us, achieve our destiny as we cooperate with the Almighty.

The significant events of Joseph's life are narrated consecutively in the four books. Joseph and His Brothers serves to orientate the reader; it is really Jacob's story that must be told before Joseph's life can have meaning. Jacob is the dominating character again in Young Joseph as the coat of many colors becomes the symbol of his favoritism for Joseph. Joseph in Egypt is based upon the episode concerning Joseph and Potiphar's wife, and Joseph the

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[2]Roy West, Jr., "Three Methods of Modern Fiction," College English, XII (January 1951), 196.

Provider is climaxed with Joseph's revelation of himself to his brothers, who have come to buy grain in Egypt. In the latter part of this fourth book Jacob journeys to Egypt to share with Joseph the central spotlight as the saga ends.

After the opening scene of Joseph and His Brothers, in which majestic old Jacob converses with young Joseph beside the well, the author invites the reader to accompany him upon a long excursion into the past. As he explains, the well of the past is very deep, if not bottomless. Joseph himself has difficulty in picturing to himself the days of his forefather Abraham before that ancient patriarch left Ur of Chaldaea to seek the living God.

> Here young Joseph's brain began to reel, just as ours does when we lean over the edge of the well; and despite some small inactitudes which his pretty and well-favored little head permitted itself but which are unsuitable for us, we may feel close to him and almost contemporary, in respect to those deep backwards and abysms of time into which so long ago he already gazed.[3]

There is a double sense of past and future blended with the potential present in the continuous reincarnation of personalities and events that fill the pages. The spiritual unrest of Abraham was born anew in Jacob and again in Joseph.

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[3]Joseph and His Brothers, translated by H. T. Lowe-Porter (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1934), p. 14.

A feeling of consecration possessed them, and their limitless capacity for adventure stirs response in the reader, who becomes eager to share with the writer an exciting plunge into the unsounded depths of the past. "Down, then, and no quaking!" he warns us. Thus the Prelude serves for orientation. Its image of the well is to reappear variously as pit, grave, womb, and death.

The narration of Jacob's life follows the biblical pattern. Mann first relates how Abraham pioneered in realms of the spirit and how Isaac, his son, sought in a humbler way to worship Jehovah. Esau's boasting about the coming blessing of Isaac is matched by the tittering of the folk of the household who know of the disappointment that awaits him as a result of Rebekah's scheming in behalf of Jacob. Lovely indeed is the twelve-year-old Rachel, "pure as the spring lilies in the field," as she first appears to Jacob, and lovely she is still to him when he kisses her, trembling, for the last time before he buries her on the road to Ephrath. The power of his love for her makes tragic and poignant his anguish in the discovery of Laban's treachery in substituting Leah for his chosen bride. Then Jacob's children--the twelve strong sons and the unfortunate Dinah--walk out of the biblical

pages into what seems to be an inevitable extension of the conflicts and jealousies, the loves and hates of this large patriarchal family. From Abraham's call to Joseph's elevation in Egypt the story unfolds.

The author mentions the difficulty of writing about people who do not know precisely who they are. A procession of generations must have filled the centuries between Jacob and the original Abraham, he ventures; the pious record has given posterity a mere abbreviation of the facts. Just as Tammuz was lured by Set into a sarcophagus and cast into the river, later to be mangled by the boar, so also was Abel murdered by Cain, Isaac threatened by Ishmael, Jacob menaced by Esau, and Joseph sold by his brothers into slavery. It was all of a pattern. Did Isaac really tell the Philistines, to whose land he fled in time of famine, that Rebekah was his sister, or was this a repetition of the experience of Abraham with Sarah in the land of Egypt? Perhaps Isaac did not have the experience "himself" in the narrower fleshly limits of his ego, but, distinguishing less sharply between "the I and the not-I" than we do, he handed down the story as one belonging to his family. History, explains Mann, is "that which has happened and that which goes on happening in time." Apparently a conservative writer, the author is experimenting and adventuring

into the unknown in this treatment of the early days of the Hebrews as much as did Abraham and Jacob and Joseph.

Young Joseph, the second book of the saga, opens without adornment or introduction save for the words, "The story goes on to tell how Joseph, being seventeen years old, was feeding the flock with his brethren . . ." The comely, precocious lad, so evidently the favorite child of Jacob, sometimes carries tales to his father about his rough, unsympathetic shepherd brothers. To them he is an "unlicked cub." So deep gnaws their jealousy at the father's preference for the son of the true wife Rachel and so goaded are they at the young man's lordly ways and prattling tongue that they vow revenge upon him when opportunity shall arise. The entire book then deals with this unfortunate situation in Jacob's family and its outcome.

Jacob is concerned not only about Joseph's material inheritance but also about his mind and spirit. Thus he chooses for the boy's tutor the honored and learned old domestic, Eliezer. Here again occurs the pattern of repetition. It was traditional, Mann explains, that there should be in every generation an Eliezer, a house steward and head servant. He has become an institution. What has happened will happen again. From Eliezer

Joseph learns about Abraham's discovery of the Almighty, a spiritual evolution which Mann expounds for the erudition of the reader, who is inclined to wonder whether such a digression does not more truly express the author's purpose than the continuation of the narrative. With a keen sense of the kinship of wisdom and beauty, which Mann ably defends in passages of profound philosophy, Joseph opens his mind to old Eliezer's teaching. Up to now the spiritual heirs of Abraham have not needed the gift of learning; certainly Jacob has not suffered from the lack of it. But this child of his heart shall want nothing that may serve to set him before his brothers.

Symbolic of Joseph's promising future and bound closely with the spiritual heritage from Jacob is the coat of many colors, which is described in Book I as the wedding gift from Laban to his daughters--first guilefully to cover Leah's identity and then openly to adorn Rachel, the true wife, in whose keeping it remains until, after her death, Jacob places it about the shoulders of his favorite son. The bestowal of the coat is the turning point of Book II; moreover, it is the pivot of the whole Joseph story. The robe represents the inheritance, the conferring of which in turn fans the fire of the brothers' jealousy so that they sell Joseph into slavery; then in the land of his bondage

the dreams, hateful to the brethren, will become a glorious reality. And all the while as Joseph stands richly arrayed before his father, beneath the lustrous beauty of the festal garment lurks the tragedy that it must bring to the proud young wearer before his destiny can be accomplished. When he approaches his brethren in the field, a gay shepherd bird in his coat of many colors, he is aghast to see them spring savagely upon him, tearing at the robe until the hateful thing falls about him in shreds and he stands naked and beaten before them. His subsequent experience in the pit becomes the inevitable reward of the father's partiality, the brothers' envy, and his own bright arrogance.

Mann offers a brilliant analysis of Joseph's mind during this painful experience. Three days he is to remain in the well. On several levels he is thinking, and the layer of cold reality is making itself felt above the others. Even as the brothers were tearing the picture-robe from his body, through his horror at their onslaught dawned a pity for the torturing hatred that he read in their rough faces, a hatred for which he himself was responsible because of his blissful self-conceit. He sees now his incredible lack of tact in telling them his dreams. Buried

here in the womb of the earth waiting for death, he still clings to a belief in the wise and healing power of Jehovah. In his suffering he admits that he has always understood how it has been with the brethren. He is honest. He knows they could not have allowed him to return home, for he would have told his father of their violence. That he realizes. So God is demanding at last the traditional sacrifice which Jacob has been unable to render freely. Abraham through holy obedience offered up Isaac for the slaughter. From Jacob must the sacrifice be torn, and Joseph's heart wells with pity for his father. He is ready now for the resurrection when the Ishmaelites come to rescue him from the depths of the blackness. Here out of his first taste of human suffering Joseph is reborn.

Mann indicates two widely different types of people in his treatment of Joseph and the brethren. Frustrated with jealousy, the brethren feel driven to dispose of the favorite. They are strong physically, content to labor with their hands. They can meet practical situations but are no match for the nimble wit of Rachel's son. The best they can do is to meet intellectual power with physical violence, only to find their victory is without triumph. Joseph, through great anguish of body and soul, is reborn; they know only dumb unhappiness after their crime.

Joseph in Egypt continues the story without interruption as Joseph questions the Ishmaelite traders: "Where are you taking me? Whither doth God lead me, in that I go with you?" Quickly he makes his way among them with his open friendliness. He looks forward with lively curiosity to behold ancient Egypt, although he cherishes also a quiet resolve not to be carried away with enthusiams for lordly elegance or to forget the power and glory of the God of Israel. The caravan leader takes a fancy to him and sells him to Potiphar's head steward, a creation of Mann called Mont-Kaw, who becomes to him a second father. Upon Mont-Kaw's death, Joseph himself is promoted to the office of steward. It is Joseph's experience with Potiphar's wife that forms the basis of the plot of Book III, and the story ends with Joseph's second descent into the pit, this time as a prisoner of Pharaoh for a sin he did not commit. His rising from this hole comprises the last chapter of the Joseph saga.

There are two elements that enter into the temptation incident: the soundness of Joseph's character and the gradual change that takes place in Potiphar's wife, whom Mann calls Mut-em-enet. The scene is so skillfully prepared that the foreordained outcome seems bound to happen.

Mut-em-enet, of noble birth, has been dedicated to the service of the gods; Potiphar has been consecrated in infancy by his parents as a eunuch. The formal nature of their marriage was at first accepted without complaint by this woman who was considered a sort of saint, reserved and apart. Step by step the author pictures her transformation from casual regard of Joseph to overwhelming desire. Freudian dreams beset her until she will stop at nothing to achieve her end. When finally she utters the fateful words to Joseph, Mann explains that "she knew herself no more; she was beside herself, her reason dethroned by agony."[4]

How does Joseph resist the temptation? Let us not be deceived in discounting his chastity as that of a simple country bumpkin, warns the author. Far from being due to inexperience, he says, it rested upon a belief that the world is permeated with love:

> He was in love with everything, with a love deserving of the adjective universal, because it did not stop at the earthly but was present as a pervasive atmosphere, as an inference, a subtle significance and unconscious background to every relation in life, even the holiest and most awe-inspiring. From this feeling his chastity proceeded.[5]

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[4] Joseph in Egypt, translated by H. T. Lowe-Porter (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1938), p. 379.

[5] Ibid., pp. 510-511.

Mann enumerates the bulwarks that held the young man steady in that last terrible hour. Most of all, it was the thought of Jacob's face that saved his son, and the burning memory of the old man's hatred for the debauchery of Egypt. This remembrance and his own mindfulness of the purity and dignity of Abraham's God kept Joseph from sin. In the powerful climax of the book, the indelible influence of his good father was stamped upon him as he made the great decision. Thus the author describes the spiritual strength that possessed the soul of Joseph:

> Something enabled Joseph, in that uttermost extremity, to tear himself way and flee: that something was his father's face--all the more detailed versions say so, and we may take it for the truth. It is so: when, despite all his skill of tongues he was almost lost, the face of his father appeared to him. Jacob's image? Yes, certainly, Jacob's image. Not an image of settled and personal lineaments which he saw somewhere in the room. Rather he saw it in his mind and with his mind's eye: an image of memory and admonition, the father's in a broad and general sense. For in it there was something of Jacob's features mingled with Potiphar's fatherly traits, there was something of the modest departed, Mont-Kaw, and over and above all these were other, mightier traits. Out of bright, brown father-eyes with soft tear-sacs beneath them, it peered at Joseph in tender concern.[6]

Shielded by his armour of integrity, Joseph stands at last victorious over his temptation and ready for the final

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[6] Ibid., p. 646.

testing that is to prepare him for his position at the right hand of Pharaoh.

Mann's method of presenting a three-dimensional view of history is especially evident in this third book of the tetralogy. He reaches backward and forward in order to make the "present" of the story actual and real. Joseph, although separated by space from his family, still feels close to his father and brethren. He remembers the patriarch Abraham as his own beloved grandfather; Lot's wife of legendary fame is a vivid reality to him. But the ingenuity of the storyteller is not limited in scope to present and past events; he makes use of clever references to the future, which awake in the reader a thrill of recognition of things to come. As the Ishmaelite caravan makes its way across the desert to the "monkeyland of Egypt," the "pillar of fire" that moves before it foreshadows the wilderness journey of the Children of Israel. When Potiphar stands in the garden listening to the young wisdom of his Hebrew slave, Mann reminds the reader of that later Lad of Nazareth who also will speak with spiritual discernment beyond his years:

In the gathering twilight, among the columns of this temple grove he [Joseph] stood there, not unlike an eager child in

whom God speaks to His own glory, loosening his tongue that it may give forth doctrine to the amazement of the doctors.[7]

The Joseph story is not an objective narrative. Frequently the author takes the stage himself to speak directly in the first person as he discusses or defends some point of interpretation. In regard to Joseph's failure to send a message home to sorrowing Jacob after he was sold to the Ishmaelites, Mann interrupts the story to say: "It seems to me urgent to defend Joseph, now and later, from a reproach which has often historically been levelled against him."[8] He assures us that Joseph did not attempt to escape from his masters or to alter his destiny lest he destroy God's plan for his life. Again Mann talks directly to the reader about the character of Mut, the "smitten one." He assures us that the frightfully frank proposal made to Joseph in Genesis was really the final outcry of an agony of spirit and flesh:

To tell the truth, I am horrified at the briefness and curtness of the original account, which does so little justice to life's bitter circumstantiality. . . . Let us remind ourselves once again that before the story was first told, it had to tell itself.[9]

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[7] Ibid., p. 261.

[8] Ibid.

[9] Ibid., p. 371.

Therefore he sets for himself the task of motivating the tremendous climax of the novel.

It is not difficult to recognize in Joseph in Egypt the prototype of the contemporary Nazi phenomenon. The underlying drama becomes intense with the knowledge of Mann's personal experience with the Hitler regime. He may have had in mind the Jewish blood of his own wife as he drew the picture of the Hebrew Joseph rising to power in a foreign land against the active opposition of the nationalistic Egyptians. Harry Slochower suggests a parallel to the Nazi exploitation of the masses as Egyptian despotism, during the sumptuous New Year's feast, "prances its splendour, distributes wine and food to compensate the taxed exploited serf for the grey misery he suffers the year round to render him a willing slave for the year to come."[10] Furthermore, Slochower sees in Mut's denouncement of Joseph a "pre-enactment of the Nazi Putsche of 1933 in which Joseph's coat is the 'sign' for which the Reichstag fire was made to serve."[11] Mann comments directly on Mut's words to the servants, lest the reader miss the clever strategy, so like that which Hitler employed against the Jews:

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[10] Thomas Mann's Joseph Story: An Interpretation (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1938), p. 55.

[11] Ibid., p. 56.

"Egyptian brothers"--They were her brothers all at once; it went through and through them, they found it thrilling. "Behold me, your mistress and mother, Petepre's [Potiphar's] chief and true wife! See me as I sit upon the threshold of this house--we know each other well, you and I!"--"We," and "each other"! They swallowed it down, this was a good day for the lower classes!--"But likewise know you this Hebrew youth, standing here half naked on this great day in the calendar. . . . He came down out of his wretched country to Egypt, Osiris' beautiful garden, the throne of Re, the horizon of the good spirit. They brought this stranger to us into this house"--"us" again!--"to mock us, and bring shame upon us."[12]

In this manner, concludes our author, things have happened, they are happening, they will continue in the years ahead. Life is a pattern of repetition.

Joseph the Provider begins with Joseph in prison. He is there, says Mann, as an instrument of God "to break open a closed alley which had but one and that an underground exit to the light." Through the long months of confinement he believes that God still can bring good out of despair. According to the biblical record, Joseph rises to a position of trust in the prison; he interprets the dreams of the butler and the baker and is finally called before Pharaoh to explain the royal dreams of the coming years of plenty and of famine. Then Joseph's outline of procedure for the fourteen-year period of abundance and want is so

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[12]Joseph in Egypt, pp. 650-651.

wise and sensible that the young monarch at once appoints him to execute the work. When famine comes, people from afar journey to Egypt for grain, and among the throngs are the sons of Jacob from the land of Canaan. Their business with Joseph is followed by the great reconciliation scene, which forms the climax of the book. The story ends after old Jacob's arrival in Egypt and his reunion with Joseph.

The reconciliation of Joseph and his brothers is really the climax of the entire tetralogy. It is linked to the giving and the rending of the coat, to the sin of the brethren and their forgiveness. They have felt a growing wonder at the uncanny wisdom of the Egyptian dignitary who so strangely blends severity and friendliness in his dealings with them. Judah delivers his heroic speech in defense of Benjamin, ending with the confession of his own sin against Rachel's eldest son. Unable longer to contain his love for them, Joseph stretches out his arms with great tenderness and reveals himself to them. He begs them not to condemn themselves as he explains: "That all had to be. God did it, not you. . . . He sent me on ahead of you to be your provider."[13] Then, as if further to heal the old

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[13] Joseph the Provider, translated by H. T. Lowe-Porter (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1944), p. 312.

wound, he speaks lightly of his youthful dreams:

> Remember how your sheaves bowed down to mine in the dream I prattled about when I was a young brat, and the stars that made curtsies? Well, that has turned out to mean nothing so very extraordinary: just that my father and brothers would thank me for what I could give them. When a man receives bread, he says, not "Hosanna in the highest," but just "Thank you very much." However, bread there has to be. Bread comes first, before all hosannas."[14]

With this speech Joseph has placed upon himself the mark of his maturity. Tact is here and loving forgiveness. Moreover, he has acknowledged his limitation. He has provided for his family's--and the world's--need; he has reached the pinnacle of earthly glory. In so doing, however, he has become willing to give back into the hands of Jacob the symbol of the coat so that the father may place upon another's shoulders the spiritual birthright of Israel. "I hear and I know," he whispers softly to Jacob in answer to the old man's words:

> God has given and has taken you, and He has given you back, but yet not quite . . . He has elevated and rejected you both in one, . . . and you are wise enough to be able to hear it. . . . But he has raised you in a worldly way, not in the sense of salvation and the inheritance of the blessing. . . . He denies you the inheritance and has punished me because secretly I wanted you to have it.[15]

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[14] Ibid.

[15] Ibid., pp. 357-358.

The spiritual heirs are Abraham, Isaac, Jacob--and Judah. Both Jacob and Joseph are the proper heroes of the saga: Jacob the spiritual prince and Joseph the temporal--both bound tenderly together through love of the dark-eyed Rachel and of Jehovah God.

More than in the other books of the tetralogy, Mann's presence as the author is felt. Increasingly toward the end of the story he converses directly with the reader. He takes us into his confidence as he reminds us that, of course, we are in no suspense as to the outcome of the plot, because we already know by heart all the phases of the story. But the players in the drama are disturbed, for they are as yet in ignorance of their fate. Even Joseph, he says, is worried before the reconciliation scene as he, like an actor, is "nervously adjusting his make-up before the curtain goes up." Again history is repeating itself. As Israel blesses the twelve sons, not only is old Isaac in the shadowy background reaching for Esau and Jacob, but also there is the prophecy of Christ as the old patriarch speaks of the coming of Shiloh, bringer of peace, the man of the star. At last Mann has Joseph speak to the brothers about their story as if all of them are simply acting out the parts assigned to them by the Director of the play. It is God's story; Joseph and the brethren have played their appointed roles. Joseph addresses them:

> When you talk to me about forgiveness it seems to me you have missed the meaning of the whole story we are in. . . . Perhaps that is the way it ought to be and I am to blame myself for always knowing far too well what was being played. Did you not hear from the father's own lips, when he gave me my blessing, that my life has always been only a play and a pattern? Did he remember, when he pronounced judgment on you, the bad things which happened between you and me? No, he kept quiet about them, because he too was in the play, God's play. . . . God turned it all to good, for I came to feed many people and so I was forced to mature somewhat. But if it is a question of pardon between us human beings, then it is I myself must beg for it, for you had perforce to be cast in the villain's part so that things might turn out as they did.[16]

Thomas Mann's biblical tetralogy differs sharply from that of Sholem Asch in that the Joseph saga is one long story extending over four books; Asch changes the center of interest from time to time. Some symbols, like the coat and the pit, occur and recur throughout Mann's entire narrative. Each book has its climax, but the story is continuous from beginning to end. There is an all-embracing humanity and kindliness about the mature Joseph, which suggest the spiritual possibilities of any man who refuses to accept defeat, who maintains his integrity through adversity, and who can keep his balance when he walks with kings. This Joseph looks steadily at life and sees it whole. The world may appear to be off balance at a given time; the forces of evil may

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[16] Ibid., pp. 416-417.

control the government. A Hitler may rise to unprecedented power. Yet Joseph, the dreamer who looks beyond our little day, can see God's hand steadily at work building a better world where all will have bread to eat and love to share. Thomas Mann is no pessimist, in spite of the day in which he lives. Through the biblical narrative of Joseph, he pictures all mankind through all the centuries. One reading does not suffice to understand all the rich background of philosophy and symbolism, which, however, are not allowed to mar the basic story. In a singularly successful fashion, the author evokes in the reader, to the end of the familiar narrative, a sense of expectancy and suspense. Mann's typist expressed the general satisfaction felt by readers when she said, upon reading the manuscript of the first Joseph novel: "Now we know at last how all this actually happened."

A P P E N D I X II

BIBLICAL NOVELS ACCORDING TO DATES OF PUBLICATION WITH ANNOTATIONS

1808 Lucas, Rev. Charles. *The Abyssinian Reformer; or, The Bible and Sabre*. 3 vols.

1811 O'Keefe, Adelaide. *Patriarchal Times; or, The Land of Canaan: A Figurate History. Seven Books Comprising Interesting Events, Incidents, and Characters, Founded on the Holy Scriptures*. 2 vols.

1824 Strauss, Gerhard Friedrich. *Helon's Pilgrimage to Jerusalem: A Picture of Judaism in the Century Which Preceded the Advent of Our Saviour*. 2 vols.

1828 Croly, George. *Salathiel, The Story of The Past, The Present and The Future*. Later reprinted by Funk and Wagnalls as *Tarry Thou Till I Come*.

The early struggle between Judaism and Christianity as told by the Wandering Jew.

1834 Quinet, Edgar. *Ahasverus*.

The Wandering Jew legend appears again.

1841 Ware, William. *Julian*.

A story of Jesus and the early Christians.

1855 Ingraham, Rev. Joseph Holt. *The Prince of the House of David; or, Three Years in the Holy City*.

The mission of Jesus told in the form of letters from a Jewish maiden to her father.

1859 _____. *The Pillar of Fire*.

A story of Moses and the Exodus.

1860 _____. The Throne of David.

The story of David's rise to power.

1867 Ebers, Georg. Joshua: A Tale of Biblical Times. 2 vols.

The biblical materials are handled with erudition.

1867 Webb, Mrs. J. B. Pomponia; or, The Gospel in Caesar's Household. Juvenile.

Claudia, Pudens, and Rufus of the New Testament appear in this story of the early Christians.

1869 Orr, Mrs. Alexander S. Leah.

A narrative dealing with Ahab.

1870 Charles, Mrs. Elizabeth (Rundle). Diary of Brother Bartholomew: with other Tales and Sketches of Christian Life in Different Lands and Ages.

1871 Whyte-Melville, G. J. Sarchedon: A Tale of the Great Queen.

Certain events in Egypt before the Exodus are introduced by a striking anachronism.

1876 Tucker, Charlotte. Heroes of Israel.

The following group of short stories is included:

Exiles in Babylon
Rescued from Egypt
Shepherd of Bethlehem
Triumph over Midian

1877 Davies, Gerald Stanley. St. Paul in Greece.

The story of Paul's missionary work.

1877 Flaubert, Gustave. Herodias.

The story of Herod's marriage with his brother's wife and the war caused by it.

1878 Abbott, Rev. Edwin A. Philochristus.

Written in the form of memoirs of one of the Lord's disciples and evidencing reverence and literary distinction.

1879 Warner, Susan. Broken Walls of Jerusalem and the Rebuilding of Them.

1880 Hodder, Edwin. Ephraim and Helah.

Concerning Moses and the Exodus.

1880 Wallace, Lew. Ben-Hur; or, The Days of the Messiah.

A colorful romance of the first century, featuring primarily the story of Christ.

1882 Abbott, Rev. Edwin A. Onesimus, Christ's Freedman.

The story of Paul and the runaway slave, told with charm and scholarly understanding.

1882 Gautier, Theophile. The Romance of a Mummy.

The Exodus story based on modern discoveries in archeology.

1885 Crawford, F. Marion. Zoroaster.

Daniel appears in this Persian romance.

1886 Walloth, Wilhelm. The King's Treasure House.

An Egyptian romance that takes place just before the Exodus.

1887 Escrich, E. P. Martyr of Golgotha.

A story of the Christ translated from the Spanish.

1888 Henty, George Alfred. The Cat of Bubastes: A Tale of Egypt in the Time of Thothmes III. Juvenile.

Moses in a character in this story of Egypt forty years before the Exodus.

1888 Osborne, Samuel Duffield. The Spell of Ashtaroth.

The story of Achan's disobedience.

1889 Church, Rev. Alfred John and Seeley, R. The Hammer. Later published as Patriot and Hero. Juvenile.

The story of the Maccabean struggle.

1889 Cooley, William Forbes. Emmanuel: The Story of the Messiah.

Doubting Thomas is featured in this fictional biography of Jesus.

1889 France, Anatole. Belthazar.

The visit of the Wise Men at Jesus' birth.

1889 Wallace, Lew. The Boyhood of Christ. Juvenile.

An imaginary presentation of the early life of Jesus.

1890 Brooks, Elbridge S. A Son of Issachar.

This melodramatic tale presents Judas Iscariot and the son of the widow of Nain.

1890 Haggard, Sir Henry Rider. The World's Desire.

An allegorical story of the Exodus in which the Greek Ulysses appears. (Rider is the author of King Solomon's Mines, currently appearing as a cinema.)

1890 Phelps, Elizabeth Stuart and Ward, Herbert D. The Master of the Magicians.

The story of Daniel in fact and fancy.

1890 Roe, E. R. Belteshazzar: Romance of Babylon.

A semi-historical narrative of Babylon during the seventy years of Jewish captivity.

1891 Bird, Robert. Jesus, The Carpenter of Nazareth.

The story of Jesus for juvenile readers.

1891 Collins, E. Leuty. Hadasseh; or, From Captivity to the Persian Throne.

The romance of the Jewish Esther who became Queen of Persia.

1891 Kitchin, W. C. The Story of Sodom.

A story of the wickedness of Sodom and its destruction.

1891 Leslie, Emma. Glaucia, The Greek Slave.

An account of the hardships of Paul and the early Christians under Nero.
Juvenile.

1891 Ludlow, James Meeker. King of Tyre: A Tale of the Times of Ezra and Nehemiah.

1891 Odell, Samuel W. Samson and Delilah.

1891 Phelps, Elizabeth Stuart and Ward, Herbert D. Come Forth.

Lazarus is raised from the dead.

1892 Church, Rev. Alfred John. The Burning of Rome: A Story of Nero's Days.
Juvenile.

1892 France, Anatole. Procurator of Judaea.
An ironic story of Pilate's failure to recall in later years the trial of Jesus.

1893 Corelli, Marie. Barabbas: A Dream of the World's Tragedy.
A highly emotional tale basing the emotions of Judas and Barabbas on sexual passion.

1893 Hillern, Wilhelmina Von. On the Cross.
A story based on the Oberammergau Passion Play.

1893 Jackson, G. A. Son of a Prophet.
The story of the Hebrews 1020-975 B.C.

1894 Ackerman, A. W. Price of Peace.
A story during the rule of King Ahab.

1895 Bird, Robert. Joseph the Dreamer.
Juvenile.

1895 Farmer, Lydia Hoyt. Doom of the Holy City.
A story of the Christ.

1895 Grahame, Kenneth. The Golden Age.
The coming of Christ.

1895 Houghton, Mrs. Louise (Seymour). Antipas, Son of Chuza.
A story of Jesus and his followers.

1895 Jacobs, Joseph. As Others Saw Him: A Retrospect, A.D. 54.

The viewpoint of the Jew is given to this story of Jesus.

1895 Jennings, Mary E. Asa of Bethlehem and His House-Hold.

A story of Jesus.

1895 Johnston, Mrs. Annie (Fellows). Joel, a Boy of Galilee.
Juvenile.

A story of Palestine in Jesus' day.

1895 Kingsley, Mrs. Florence (Morse). Titus, a Comrade of the Cross.
Juvenile.

A story of the days of Christ.

1895 Sienkiewicz, Henryk. Quo Vadis: A Narrative of the Time of Nero.

A spectacular story of the persecution of the early Christians by Nero. Peter and Paul play important parts.

1896 Kingsley, Mrs. Florence (Morse). Stephen, A Soldier of the Cross.
Juvenile.

A story of the early Christians.

1896 Mason, Caroline Atwater. Quiet King.

A story of the compelling personality of Jesus.

1896 Stoddard, William Osborn. The Swordmaker's Son.
Juvenile.

A story of the days of Jesus.

1896 Van Dyke, Henry. The Story of the Other Wise Man.

One of America's best-loved Christmas classics, telling of the Wise Man who searched through the years for the King.

1897 Barrett, Wilson. The Sign of the Cross: A Historical Novel during the Times of Nero.

1897 Kingsley, Mrs. Florence (Morse). Paul, A Herald of the Cross.
Juvenile.

A story of Jesus' last days.

1897 Yonge, Charlotte Mary. Pilgrimage of the Ben Beriah.
Juvenile.

A story of Moses and the Exodus.

1898 Wood, Henry. Victor Serenus: A Story of the Pauline Era.

1898 Yonge, Charlotte Mary. Patriots of Palestine.
Juvenile.

A narrative of the Maccabean revolt.

1899 Stoddard, William Osborn. Ulric the Jarl: A Story of the Penitent Thief.

A story of one of the thieves crucified with Jesus.

Two books published in the 1880's or 1890's but not precisely dated (mentioned by Nield, 1911 ed.):

Bramston, Mary. The King's Daughters.
Juvenile.

A story of the children of King Zedekiah.

Wood, Frances Hariott. For an Atonement.

A story in the years following Jehu.

1900 Bird, Robert. Paul of Tarsus.
Juvenile.

The missionary work of Paul.

1900 Kingsley, Mrs. Florence (Morse). The Cross Triumphant.
Juvenile.

A Jewish view of early Christianity.

1901 Ludlow, James Meeker. Deborah: A Tale of the Times of Judas Maccabaeus.

A story of brave Judas Maccabaeus.

1902 Davis, William Stearns. Belshazzar: A Tale of the Fall of Babylon.

A story of the prophets Daniel and Isaiah.

1902 Ellis, J. Breckenridge. Adnah: A Tale of the Time of Christ.

A story of the early Christians.

1902 Hales, A. G. Jair the Apostate.

A story featuring Samson.

1902 McLaws, Miss L. Jezebel.

A tale of the wicked queen.

1902 Potter, M. H. Istar of Babylon: A Phantasy.

A fanciful tale of Daniel and Istar, daughter of the moon god.

1903 Andreev, Leonid. Ben Tobit.

A merchant with an aching tooth is unaffected by the Crucifixion.

1903 Anonymous. The Life of Saint Mary Magdalen.

A quaint story picturing the Magdalene with the biblical scene described as if it were Italian.

1903 Davenport, Arnold. By the Ramparts of Jezreel.

Elisha and Ahab struggle for power after Elijah's death.

1903 Gowing, Mrs. Aylmer. By Thames and Tiber.

A picture of Paul and the early Christians in Nero's Rome.

1904 Ashton, Mark. Jezebel's Husband.

Obadiah and Elijah appear in this tale of Ahab's reign.

1904 Bacheller, Irving Addison. Vergilius: A Tale of the Coming of Christ.

Herod and Salome are historical figures in the story.

1904 Gardenhire, Samuel M. Lux Crucis: A Tale of the Great Apostle.

A narrative about Paul.

1904 Mason, Caroline Atwater. The White Shield.

A story of Paul and Thekla of legendary fame.

1904 Miller, Elizabeth. The Yoke: A Romance of the Days When the Lord Redeemed the Children of Israel from the Bondage of Egypt.

A scholarly handling of the Exodus story.

1904 Way, A. S. David the Captain.

Saul and David struggle for power.

1905 Beddoes, Captain Willoughby. A Son of Ashur.

A story of the days of Nebuchadnezzar.

1905 Buchanan, Thompson. Judith Triumphant.

Apocryphal Judith saves her people.

1905 Church, Rev. Alfred John. The Crown of Pine. Juvenile.

A story of Paul during the reign of Claudius.

1905 Kelly, William Patrick. The Assyrian Bride.

A story of Nineveh and Jerusalem when Ahaz was king of Judah.

1905 Kingsley, Mrs. Florence (Morse). Love Triumphant; or, A Street Boy of Jerusalem. Juvenile.

1905 More, E. Anson. A Captain of Men.

In the days when David was an outlaw and Hiram ruled Tyre.

1905 Read, Opie Percival. The Son of a Swordmaker. Juvenile.

A story of a Roman soldier during Christ's ministry.

1905 Rosegger, Peter, I.N.R.I. A Prisoner's Story of the Cross.

The life of Christ told in conversational style by a humble German carpenter under condemnation of death.

1906 Andreev, Leonid. Eleasar.

A story of the risen Lazarus in an atmosphere laden with terror.

1906 Hobbs, Roe Raymond. The Court of Pilate: A Story of Jerusalem in the Days of Christ.

Amid the atmosphere of the decadent Roman court life Jewish resistance flares again.

1906 Miller, Elizabeth. Saul of Tarsus: A Tale of the Early Christians.

A story featuring Mary Magdalen and Paul.

1906 Schuyler, William. Under Pontius Pilate: being a part of the correspondence between Caius Claudius Proculus in Judea and Lucius Domitius Ahenobarbus at Athens in the years 28 and 29 A.D.: translated and edited by W. Schuyler.

Pilate's nephew writes to a learned Greek to tell him about Jesus and his ministry.

1907 Andreev, Leonid. Judas Iscariot.

Judas becomes gradually insane in this intense psychological story.

1907 Kelly, William Patrick. The Stonecutter of Memphis.

Joseph rescues a girl accused of killing a sacred cat.

1907 Klarmann, Andrew. The Princess of Gan-Sar.

Mary Magdalene is the leading character.

1907 Ludlow, James Meeker. Jesse ben David, A Shepherd of Bethlehem.

A story of the first Christmas.

1907 Smyth, Samuel Phillips Newman. The Story of the Child that Jesus Took.

A fictitious story of a child Jesus noticed in a Capernaum home.

1908 Bradley, Samuel Carlyle. Jesus of Nazareth.

A story of the early years of Jesus.

1908 Robinson, Nellie G. Philo's Daughter: The Story of the Daughter of the Thief with Whom Jesus Was Crucified.

1909 Byatt, H. The Testament of Judas.

The gospel of Judas as if edited by a Phoenician.

1909 Clark, Alfred. Lemuel of the Left Hand: A Biblical Romance.

Naboth, Jehu, and Obadiah appear in this narrative of the reign of Ahab.

1909 Copus, Rev. John Edwin. The Son of Siro: A Story of Lazarus.

Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead.

1909 Kingsley, Mrs. Florence (Morse). The Star of Love. Juvenile.

A retelling of Esther's story.

1909 Roberson, Mrs. H. G. Mary of Magdala.

John on Patmos tells the "real" story of the Magdalene.

1910 Macfarlane, Peter Clark. The Centurion's Story.

The Crucifixion as seen by a Roman soldier.

1911 Bird, Robert. John: The Companion of Jesus. Juvenile.

A story of John and Jesus.

1911 Jenkins, R. Wade. The Last Days of Babylon; or, O King, Live for Ever!

A story of the fall of Babylon.

1912 Walker, Agnese Laurie. Hadassah, Queen of Persia.

A retelling of the romance of Esther.

1913 Johnson, Gillard. Raphael of the Olive.

A love story of Maccabaean days.

1913 Kingsley, Mrs. Florence (Morse). Veronica.

Pilate and his wife face the conflict raised about Jesus.

1914 Van Dyke, Henry. The Lost Boy.
Juvenile.

A charming story of the twelve-year-old Jesus in Jerusalem.

1915 Saunders, W. J. The Nazarene.

A servant of Pilate views Jesus.

1916 Moore, George. The Brook Kerith.

A story presenting Jesus surviving the Crucifixion and living to old age.

1917 Brady, C. T. When the Sun Stood Still.

The story of Joshua's conquest of the Promised Land.

1918 Haggard, Sir Henry Rider. Moon of Israel.

A love story in the time of the Exodus.

1919 Anonymous. By an Unknown Disciple.

An unknown disciple of the Lord writes the gospel story.

1919 Baker, Amy J. Tyrian Purple.

Featuring Jehu in the time of King Ahab.

1920 Mapu, Abraham. Sorrows of Noma.

A romance during the reign of Ahab.

1921 Jenkins, B. A. Princess Salome.

The imaginary romance of Stephen and Salome and of Paul and Mary of Bethany.

1922 Deamer, Dulcie. Revelation.

A pious story about the ministry of Jesus.

1922 Finney, Marian. In Naaman's House.

A story of Elisha and the leper.

1922 Strachey, Marjorie. David the Son of Jesse.

The story of David related in a modern, matter-of-fact way.

1923 Allinson, Anne Crosby (Emery). Children of the Way.

A devout story of the early Christians.

1923 Kuprin, Aleksandr Ivanovich. Sulamith: A Prose Poem of Antiquity.

A story about Solomon.

1923 Lowe, Ephraim Noble. The Tishbite.

A story of the prophet Elijah.

1923 Shastid, T. H. Simon of Cyrene.

An allegorical narrative of Simon who bore the cross of Jesus.

1924 Eckenstein, L. Tutankh Atin.

A story of Moses by an author who has done archeological research.

1924 Laut, A. C. Quenchless Light.

A story of the slave Onesimus who became a bishop.

1924 Mardrus, Joseph Charles. The Queen of Sheba.

An Arabic folklore version of Solomon and the Queen.

1924 Seymour, St. John D. Tales of King Solomon.

A story of Solomon is compounded from the legends of many lands.

1925 Graves, Robert. My Head! My Head!

A story of Elisha and the son of the Shunammite woman.

1925 Nathan, Robert. Jonah.

A very human Jonah is presented in a delicately ironical fantasy.

1925 Oxenham, John. The Hidden Years.

An adoring next-door neighbor and boyhood friend of Jesus tells the story of Jesus' boyhood.

1925 Pier, Garrett Chatfield. Hidden Valley.

A story of the Exodus from the viewpoint of both Hebrews and Egyptians.

1925 Rawlins, Eustace ("Eustace R.," pseud.) The Hidden Treasures of Egypt.

A story of the Hebrew Exodus.

1925 Sears, E. H. Zatthu.

A story centering about the Crucifixion.

1925 Train, Arthur Cheney. The Lost Gospel.

The lost gospel as it is supposedly revealed in an ancient papyrus.

1926 Warmington, Gertrude Roper. King of Dreams: A Romance in the Days of the Christ.

A story of the Rich Young Ruler who came to Jesus.

1927 Bacheller, Irving Addison. Dawn.

An extension of the story of the woman who was told by Jesus to "go and sin no more."

1927 Barbusse, Henri. Jesus.

A fervent story told as if written by Jesus.

1927 Byrne, Donn. Brother Saul.

Saul the Jew becomes the courageous Christian missionary.

1927 Erskine, John. Adam and Eve: Though He Knew Better.

Adam, Eve, and Lilith form the eternal triangle.

1927 Gordon, Charles William (Ralph Connor, pseud.). The Friendly Four and Other Stories.

Fictitious tales about minor characters of the New Testament.

1927 Sheppard, Alfred Tressider. The Autobiography of Judas Iscariot.

The life story of Judas.

1928 Bradford, Roark. Ol' Man Adam an' His Chillun: Being the Tales They Tell about the Time When the Lord Walked the Earth Like a Natural Man.

Old Testament stories told in Negro dialect.

1928 Crozier, William P. Letters of Pontius Pilate.

A story in the form of correspondence between Pilate and his friend Seneca in Rome.

1928 Davis, Elmer Holmes. Giant Killer.

Joab is the real hero in this story of an unheroic David.

1928 Fleg, Edmond. The Life of Moses.

Written by a Jewish man of letters with poetic beauty.

1928 Jansen, Werner. The Light of Egypt.

The Exodus story retold.

1928 Littell, Philip. This Way Out.

Adam leaves Eden to look for happiness.

1928 Sheehan, Murray, Eden.

In the Garden Lilith represents earth's opposition to God.

1928 Tucker, Louis. When He Came to Himself.

An enlarged account of the Prodigal Son.

1928 Untermeyer, Louis. Moses.

A story of the Jewish Lawgiver--part mystic and part hypocrite.

1928 Washburn, Robert Collyer. Samson.

A burlesque account of the Hebrew hero.

1929 Eyles, Margaret Leonora. Shepherd of Israel.

A narrative of Moses featuring the human side.

1929 Granger, Mary. Wife to Pilate.

A portrayal of the childlike Claudia and her husband.

1929 Parker, Sir Gilbert. The Promised Land.

An expansion of the story of David and Saul.

1929 Scott, Gabriel. The Golden Gospel.

Peter and the Lord wander on earth until Peter learns the golden gospel of love.

1930 Anonymous. Paul the Christian. (Sometimes called Paul the Jew.)

An account of Paul's conversion and missionary work.

1930 Bonser, Edna Madison. The Little Boy of Nazareth. Juvenile.

A charming story of Jesus' boyhood.

1930 Bradford, Roark. Ol' King David an' the Philistine Boys.

David's story in Negro dialect.

1930 Fleg, Edmond. The Life of Solomon.

A poetic biography based on history and legend.

1930 Oxenham, John. Splendour of the Dawn.

A Roman soldier tells the story of Jesus and the early church.

1930 Roberts, Carl Eric Bechhofer. Corn in Egypt.

The Joseph story presenting the hero as ambitious and clever.

1930 Zhabotinsky, Vladimir Evgenevich. Samson the Nazarite.

(First published as Judge and Fool.)

Delilah and the Philistines are depicted in a good light.

1931 Komroff, Manuel. Two Thieves.

A fictitious narrative of the malefactors crucified with Jesus.

1931 Lawrence, David Herbert. The Man Who Died.

A well-written story with Jesus fantastically surviving to old age.

1931 Nazhivin, Ivan F. According to Thomas: An Historical Novel of the First Century.

A story told as an additional gospel.

1931 Salten, Felix. Samson and Delilah.

Delilah is pictured as a faithful, heroic wife.

1931 Wallis, Louis. By the Waters of Babylon.

A story of Nebuchadnezzar and Zedekiah and the burning of Jerusalem.

1932 Oxenham, John. The Master's Golden Years.

A story of the active ministry of Jesus.

1932 Siviter, Anna. Within the Palace Gates.

An account of Nehemiah and his work in Persia.

1933 Borden, Mary. Mary of Nazareth.

A story of the mother of Jesus told graciously and with literary merit.

1933 Des Valliers, Jean. Mary of Jerusalem.

An imaginary but reverent story of the mother of Jesus.

1934 Mann, Thomas. Joseph and His Brothers.

The first of the Joseph saga. Jacob recalls the story of his life.

1934 Mazer, Sonia. Yossele's Holiday.
Juvenile.

A grandfather tells his Russian-Jewish grandson about the Maccabaean struggle.

1934 Oxenham, John. Christ and the Third Wise Man.

A fictitious account of the youngest of the Magi.

1934 Walker, K. M. and Boumphrey, G. M. The Log of the Ark.
Juvenile.

An amusing note on Noah's experience in the ark.

1935 Borden, Mary. King of the Jews.

A narrative starting with the Crucifixion and including events after Christ's death.

1935 Bradley, S. C. Jesus of Nazareth.

A re-creation of the life of Jesus.

1935 Browne, Louis. All Things Are Possible.

An imaginary version of Mary Magdalen as the epileptic daughter of a mad shoe maker.

1935 Erskine, John. Solomon, My Son.

A clever, modern treatment of Solomon.

1935 Fleg, Edmond. Jesus.

In the framework of the Wandering Jew.

1935 Graham, Hiram. Joseph, the Husband of Mary.

Joseph is pictured as a learned physician.

1935 Hardy, William G. Abraham, Prince of Ur.

A colloquial treatment of Abraham.

1935 Hart, Elizabeth. The Husband of Mary.

A story of the courtship and marriage of Joseph and Mary.

1935 Mann, Thomas. Young Joseph.

Joseph's struggle with his brothers and their revenge.

1935 Olivier, Edith. Mary Magdalen.

A picture of Mary in medieval setting.

1936 Wheeler, P. Golden Legend of Ethiopia.

An Ethiopian version of the romance of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba.

1936 Meissinger, Karl A. Divine Adventurer.

Second Isaiah is shown against the background of the sixth century before Christ.

1937 Blaker, Richard. Thou Art the Man.

A story of David and his great sin.

1937 Frankau, Pamela. Jezebel.

A good narrative of the life of wicked Jezebel.

1937 Mapu, Abraham. The Shepherd Prince.

A romance in the days of the prophet Isaiah.

1937 Mottram, Ralph Hale. Noah.
Juvenile.

The life story of the patriarch and the great flood.

1938 Mann, Thomas. Joseph in Egypt.

An account of Joseph from his rescue out of the pit to his betrayal by Potiphar's wife.

1938 Werfel, Franz V. Hearken unto the Voice.

A European, visiting the site of the Temple, sees the life of Jeremiah as in a vision.

1939 Asch, Sholem. The Nazarene.

Set in a framework of modern Poland, the gospel story is told three times by different characters.

1939 Hurston, Zora N. Moses, Man of the Mountain.

A narrative of Moses as a voodoo man is related humorously in Negro dialect.

1939 Linklater, Eric. Judas.

A psychological character study of Judas in the last days of his life.

1939 Southon, Arthur E. This Evil Generation.

A story of Moses.

1939 Tandrup, Harald. The Reluctant Prophet.

An account of Jonah, an insignificant cake seller of Tyre, who goes forth to preach to Nineveh.

1940 Daugherty, Sonia. Wings of Glory.
Juvenile.

A retelling of David's story.

1940 Stuart, Frank S. Caravan for China.

The adventures of Simon of Cyrene, who commands the caravan to China.

1941 Fineman, Irving. Jacob: An Autobiographical Novel.

A representation of Jacob as a sensitive, benevolent man, who writes a chronicle for his son, Joseph.

1941 Sutphen, Van Tassel. I, Nathanael, Knew Jesus.

The gospel story as if told by the apostle Nathanael.

1942 Douglas, Lloyd Cassel. The Robe.

A narrative of the Roman soldier who won the robe of Jesus at the Crucifixion.

1942 Hardy, William George. All the Trumpets Sounded: A Novel Based on the Life of Moses.

An imaginary extension of the story of Moses and the Exodus.

1942 Komroff, Manuel. In the Years of Our Lord.

A re-creation of the life of Jesus.

1943 Asch, Sholem. The Apostle.

An interpretation of Christianity as the culminating and finest step in Jewish religion. The life of Paul.

1944 Hartley, J. M. The Way.

The search of the Magi to find again the Child of the Bethlehem Star.

1944 Mann, Thomas. Joseph, The Provider.

The fourth of the Joseph books, telling of Joseph's rise to power in Egypt and his reunion with his family.

1944 Murphy, Edward Francis. The Scarlet Lily.

An imaginary extension of the life of Mary Magdalene.

1944 Perkins, Jacob Randolph. The Emperor's Physician.

Two physicians on a medical mission representing the Roman government cross the path of Jesus.

1944 Wilson, Dorothy Clarke. The Brother.

The life story of James, the brother of Jesus.

1945 Bauer, Florence Ann (Marvyne). Behold Your King.

A retelling of the last two years of Jesus' life.

1945 Lillie, Amy Morris. Nathan, Boy of Capernaum. Juvenile.

A story about Jesus.

1945 Mann, Thomas. Tables of the Law.

A short, realistic version of Moses and the great deliverance.

1945 Robey, John Brett. The Innovator.

The last week of Jesus' life and the plot against him.

1946 Bekessy, Emery and Hemberger, Andreas. Barabbas: A Novel of the Time of Jesus.

A picture of Barabbas, man of violence and force, in contrast to Jesus.

1946 Eberle, Gertrude. Charioteer: A Story of Old Egypt in the Days of Joseph.

A narrative of Joseph and his bondslave, who wanted to be a charioteer.

1946 Graves, Robert. King Jesus.

Jesus is portrayed as the child of Mary and Antipater, son of Herod.

1946 Heard, Gerald. Gospel According to Gamaliel.

A retelling of the story of Jesus supposedly by Gamaliel, Jewish scholar, in an effort to reconcile Jewish and Christian beliefs.

1946 Lau, Mrs. Josephine Sanger. Beggar Boy of Galilee. Juvenile.

The story of Bartimaeus and Jesus.

1946 Loewenstein, Prince Hubertus zu. The Lance of Longinus.

The story of the Roman soldier who pierced the side of Jesus.

1946 Murphy, Edward Francis. Road from Olivet.

A Catholic story continuing the life of Mary Magdalene in Rome.

1946 Schmitt, Gladys (Mrs. Simon Goldfield). David the King.

A retelling of the story of the great Hebrew King in a novel of unusual literary merit.

1946 Wilson, Dorothy Clarke. The Herdsman.

A stirring interpretation of the prophet Amos.

1947 Bercovici, Konrad. The Exodus.

The life of Moses by a good storyteller.

1947 Frost, Elizabeth (Hollister). Mary and the Spinners.

A poetic narrative of the five maidens who, with Mary (mother of Jesus), were spinners in the Temple at Jerusalem.

1947 Lillie, Amy Morris. Stephen, Boy of the Mountain. Juvenile.

The story of a little Greek boy who is healed by Jesus.

1947 Malvern, Gladys. According to Thomas.

Doubting Thomas retells the gospel story.

1947 Parker, Norton S. Table in the Wilderness.

A fictional biography of Joseph.

1948 Bauer, Florence Anne (Marvyne). Abram, Son of Terah.

The early life of Abraham in the city of Ur.

1948 Blythe, LeGette. Bold Galilean.

The life of Jesus from the viewpoint of the centurion whose servant was healed by Jesus.

1948 Douglas, Lloyd Cassel. The Big Fisherman.

The story centers about Peter but includes also special interest in the Arabian wife of Herod.

1948 Fast, Howard M. My Glorious Brothers.

A stirring tale of the Maccabaean struggle.

1949 Asch, Sholem. Mary.

A beautiful story of Mary, mother of Jesus, from her marriage to Joseph to the Resurrection.

1949 Brooker, Bertram. The Robber: A Tale of the Time of the Herods.

A narrative of Barabbas as champion of the poor.

1949 Fineman, Irving. Ruth.

The romance of Ruth, who returns with Naomi to Bethlehem.

1949 Hamon, Marcel. Nightfall at Noon.

The Crucifixion through the eyes--and the ear--of the High Priest's servant whose ear was cut off and healed in the Garden of Gethsemane.

1949 Ingles, James Wesley. Woman of Samaria.

An extension of the story of the woman at the well in Samaria and her five husbands.

1949 Wilson, Dorothy Clarke. Prince of Egypt.

Moses' life retold as a story of romance and adventure and deliverance.

1950 Bell, Mrs. Sallie Lee. Until the Day Break.

Mary of Magdala is the central figure of this story of intrigue at Herold's court.

1950 Dieterle, William (William Sidney, pseud.). Good Tidings.

A narrative of John the Baptist, fore-runner of Christ.

1950 Frischauer, Paul. So Great A Queen: The Story of Esther, Queen of Persia.

An exciting retelling of the romance of Esther.

1950 Lofts, Norah (Robinson). Esther.

Another interpretation of the romance of the Persian Queen.

1950 MacClure, Victor. A Certain Woman: The Story of Mary Magdalene.

Mary is pictured as a spirited, well-educated girl, who is misunderstood by her people.

1950 Marshall, Effie L. Queen Esther.

An account of Esther's thrilling ascent to the Persian throne and her deliverance of the Jews.

1950 Murphy, Edward Francis. The Song of the Cave: A Tale of Ruth and Naomi.

An elaboration of the biblical story, emphasizing Ruth's position as ancestor of Jesus.

1950 Perri, Francesco. The Unknown Disciple.

A story of the early days of Christianity.

1951 Asch, Sholem. Moses.

An excellent interpretation of the life of the great Jewish lawgiver, deliverer, and prophet.

1951 Blythe, LeGette. A Tear for Judas.

A sympathetic interpretation of Judas, disciple of violence, who cannot grasp Jesus' concept of love.

1951 Brod, Max. The Master.

The story of Jesus as seen by those who knew him.

1951 Fisher, Vardis. The Valley of Vision.

A picture of Solomon and his favorite Egyptian wife.

1951 Fox, Paul Hervey. The Daughter of Jairus.

A novel interpretation of Jairus and his young daughter, who was restored to life by Jesus.

1951 Ibn-Zahav, Ari. David and Bathsheba.

The old King recounts the story of his life, emphasizing the powerful influence of Bathsheba throughout the years.

1951 Kossak-Szczucka, Zofia. The Covenant: A Novel of the Life of Abraham the Prophet.

An excellent interpretation of the Hebrew patriarch.

1951 Lagerkvist, Pär. Barabbas.

A great psychological study of the mind of Barabbas.

1951 Malvern, Gladys. Behold Your Queen!

A retelling of the story of Esther and her heroic rescue of the Jews.

1951 Shippen, Katherine. Moses.
Juvenile.

The story of Moses and the Exodus.

1951 Simons, Katherine (Drayton Mayrant, pseud.). First the Blade.

A narrative of the wife of Pontius Pilate.

1951 Slaughter, Frank G. The Road to Bithynia.

A novel about Luke, the beloved physician and companion of Paul.

1952 Berstl, Julius. The Tentmaker.

A story of Paul, great Christian missionary, in his younger days.

1952 Costain, Thomas Bertram. The Silver Chalice.

A story of the early Christians and the Cup from which Jesus drank at the Last Supper.

1952 Denker, Herny. Salome: Princess of Galilee.

Salome, who danced before Herod, is identified with the Salome who went with spices to the tomb of Jesus.

1952 Goris, Johannes Albertus (Marnix Gijsen, pseud.). The Book of Joachim of Babylon.

A sophisticated story of apocryphal Susanna.

1953 Blackstock, Josephine. One Who Returned.

A novel of Jerusalem in the time of Christ.

1953 Lovelace, Delos Wheeler. Journey to Bethlehem.

A tender story of the journey of Mary and Joseph.

1953 Slaughter, Frank G. The Galileans: A Novel of Mary Magdalene.

An imaginary extension of the biblical story with many plot complications.

1953 Weinreb, Nathaniel Norsen. The Babylonians.

Nebuchadnezzar's struggle to conquer Jerusalem with Jeremiah as a major character.

1954 Ley-Piscator, Maria. Lot's Wife.

A re-creation of Abram, Lot, and Lot's wife in ancient Ur and Sodom.

1954 Penfield, Wilder. No Other Gods.

Another retelling of Abraham's story.

1954 Simpson, Evan John. Darkness.

A story of early Christianity in the months immediately following the Crucifixion.

1954 Slaughter, Frank G. The Song of Ruth: A Love Story from the Old Testament.

1954 Southon, Arthur Eustace. On Eagles' Wings.

Another Moses story.

1954 Weinreb, Nathaniel Norsen. The Sorceress.

A story of Deborah's heroic part in the conquest of Canaan.

A P P E N D I X III

BIBLICAL NOVELS ACCORDING TO SUBJECT MATTER

GENERAL OLD TESTAMENT

1808 Lucas, Rev. Charles. *The Abyssinian Reformer.*
1811 O'Keefe, Adelaide. *Patriarchal Times.*
1876 Tucker, Charlotte. *Heroes of Israel.*
1893 Jackson, G. A. *Son of a Prophet.*
1928 Bradford, Roark. *Ol' Man Adam an' His Chillun.*

GENERAL NEW TESTAMENT

1867 Webb, Mrs. J. B. *Pomponia.*
1878 Abbott, Rev. Edwin A. *Philochristus.*
1880 Wallace, Lew. *Ben-Hur.*
1891 Leslie, Emma. *Glaucia, The Greek Slave.*
1892 Church, A. J. *The Burning of Rome.*
1895 Farmer, Lydia Hoyt. *Doom of the Holy City.*
1895 Jennings, Mary E. *Asa of Bethlehem and His Household.*
1895 Johnston, Annie F. *Joel, a Boy of Galilee.*
1895 Kingsley, Florence M. *Titus, a Comrade of the Cross.*
1895 Sienkiewicz, Henryk. *Quo Vadis.*
1896 Kingsley, Florence M. *Stephen, a Soldier of the Cross.*
1896 Stoddard, William O. *The Swordmaker's Son.*
1897 Barrett, Wilson. *The Sign of the Cross.*
1900 Kingsley, Florence M. *The Cross Triumphant.*
1902 Ellis, J. Breckenridge. *Adnah.*
1903 Andreev, Leonid M. *Ben Tobit.*
1903 Gowing, Mrs. Aylmer. *By Thames and Tiber.*
1905 Kingsley, Florence M. *Love Triumphant.*
1905 Read, Opie P. *The Son of a Swordmaker.*
1907 Smyth, Samuel P. N. *The Story of the Child that Jesus Took.*
1922 Deamer, Dulcie. *Revelation.*
1923 Allinson, Anne C. *Children of the Way.*
1927 Bacheller, Irving A. *Dawn.*
1928 Tucker, Louis. *When He Came to Himself.*
1945 Lillie, May M. *Nathan.*
1947 _____. *Stephen.*

1952 Costain, Thomas. The Silver Chalice.
1954 Simpson, Evan J. Darkness.

JESUS

1841 Ware, William. Julian.
1855 Ingraham, J. H. The Prince of the House of David.
1870 Charles, Elizabeth (Rundle). Diary of Brother Bartholomew.
1887 Escrich, E. P. The Martyr of Golgotha.
1889 Cooley, William F. Emmanuel.
1889 Wallace, Lew. The Boyhood of Christ.
1891 Bird, Robert. Jesus, the Carpenter of Nazareth.
1893 Hillern, Wilhelmina Von. On the Cross.
1895 Grahame, Kenneth. Golden Age.
1895 Jacobs, Joseph. As Others Saw Him.
1896 Mason, Caroline A. Quiet King.
1905 Rosegger, Peter. A Prisoner's Story of the Cross.
1907 Ludlow, James. Jesse ben David.
1908 Bradley, S. C. Jesus of Nazareth.
1910 Macfarlane, Peter C. The Centurion's Story.
1914 Van Dyke, Henry. The Lost Boy.
1915 Saunders, W. J. The Nazarene.
1916 Moore, George. The Brook Kerith.
1919 Anonymous. By an Unknown Disciple.
1925 Oxenham, John. The Hidden Years.
1925 Sears, Edmund H. Zatthu.
1925 Train, Arthur C. The Lost Gospel.
1926 Warmington, Gertrude R. King of Dreams.
1927 Barbusse, Henri. Jesus.
1930 Bonser, Edna M. The Little Boy of Nazareth.
1931 Lawrence, D. H. The Man Who Died.
1931 Nazhivin, I. F. According to Thomas.
1932 Oxenham, John. The Master's Golden Years.
1934 _____. Christ and the Third Wise Man.
1935 Borden, Mary. King of the Jews.
1935 Bradley, S. C. Jesus of Nazareth.
1935 Fleg, Edmond. Jesus.
1939 Asch, Sholem. The Nazarene.
1941 Sutphen, Van Tassel. I, Nathanael, Knew Jesus.
1942 Douglas, Lloyd C. The Robe.
1942 Komroff, Manuel. In the Years of Our Lord.
1944 Hartley, J. M. The Way.

1944 Perkins, Jacob R. The Emperor's Physician.
1945 Bauer, Florence Anne. Behold Your King.
1945 Robey, John B. The Innovator.
1946 Graves, Robert. King Jesus.
1946 Heard, Gerald. Gospel According to Gamaliel.
1946 Loewenstein, Hubertus zu. The Lance of Longinus.
1947 Malvern, Gladys. According to Thomas.
1948 Blythe, LeGette. Bold Galilean.
1949 Hamon, Marcel. Nightfall at Noon.
1950 Perri, Francesco. The Unknown Disciple.
1951 Brod, Max. The Master.
1953 Blackstock, Josephine. One Who Returned.

ADAM AND EVE

1927 Erskine, John. Adam and Eve.
1928 Littell, Philip. This Way Out.
1928 Sheehan, Murray. Eden.

ABRAHAM

1935 Hardy, William G. Abraham, Prince of Ur.
1948 Bauer, Florence Anne. Abram, Son of Terah.
1951 Kossak-Szczucka, Zofia. The Covenant.
1954 Ley-Piscator, Maria. Lot's Wife.
1954 Penfield, Wilder. No Other Gods.

AHAB AND JEZEBEL

1869 Orr, Mrs. Alexander S. Leah.
1880's Wood, Frances H. For an Atonement.
1894 Ackerman, A. W. Price of Peace.
1902 McLaws, Miss L. Jezebel.
1903 Davenport, Arnold. By the Ramparts of Jezreel.
1904 Ashton, Mark. Jezebel's Husband.
1909 Clark, Alfred. Lemuel of the Left Hand.
1919 Baker, Amy J. Tyrian Purple.
1937 Frankau, Pamela. Jezebel.

AHAZ

1905 Kelley, William P. The Assyrian Bride.
1920 Mapu, Abraham. The Sorrows of Noma.

AMOS

1946 Wilson, Dorothy Clarke. The Herdsman.

BARABBAS

1893 Corelli, Marie. Barabbas.
1946 Bekessy, Emery and Hemberger, Andreas. Barabbas.
1949 Brooker, Bertram. The Robber.
1951 Lagerkvist, Pär. Barabbas.

BARTIMAEUS

1946 Lau, Josephine. Beggar Boy of Galilee.

DANIEL

1885 Crawford, F. Marion. Zoroaster.
1890 Phelps, Elizabeth Stuart and Ward, Herbert D. The Master of the Magicians.
1890 Roe, E. R. Belteshazzar.
1902 Davis, William Stearns. Belshazzar.
1902 Potter, Margaret H. Istar of Babylon.
1905 Beddoes, Captain Willoughby. A Son of Ashur.
1911 Jenkins, R. Wade. Last Days of Babylon.

DAVID

1860 Ingraham, Rev. John H. The Throne of David.
1904 Way, A. S. David the Captain.
1905 More, E. Anson. A Captain of Men.

1922 Strachey, Marjorie. David, the Son of Jesse.
1928 Davis, Elmer H. Giant Killer.
1929 Parker, Sir Gilbert. The Promised Land.
1930 Bradford, Roark. Ol' King David and the Philistine Boys.
1937 Blaker, Richard. Thou Art the Man.
1940 Daugherty, Sonia. Wings of Glory.
1946 Schmitt, Gladys. David the King.
1951 Inb-Zahav, Ari. David and Bathsheba.

DEBORAH

1954 Weinreb, Nathaniel Norsen. The Sorceress.

ELIJAH

1923 Lowe, Ephraim N. The Tishbite.

ELISHA (See also AHAB)

1922 Finney, Marian. In Naaman's House.
1925 Graves, Robert. My Head! My Head!

ESTHER

1891 Collins, E. Leuty. Hadasseh.
1909 Kingsley, Florence (Morse). The Star of Love.
1912 Walker, Agnese Laurie. Hadassah.
1950 Frischauer, Paul. So Great a Queen.
1950 Lofts, Norah (Robinson). Esther.
1950 Marshall, Effie L. Queen Esther.
1951 Malvern, Gladys. Behold Your Queen!

EVE (See ADAM and EVE)

EZRA AND NEHEMIAH

1879 Warner, Susan. Broken Walls of Jerusalem.
1891 Ludlow, James M. The King of Tyre.
1932 Siviter, Anna. Within the Palace Gates.

HEROD, HERODIAS, AND SALOME

1877 Flaubert, Gustave. Herodias.
1904 Bacheller, Irving A. Vergilius.
1921 Jenkins, Burris A. Princess Salome.
1950 Bell, Sallie Lee. Until the Day Break.
1952 Denker, Henry. Salome: Princess of Galilee.

ISAIAH

1936 Meissinger, Karl A. Divine Adventurer.
1937 Mapu, Abraham. The Shepherd Prince.

JACOB

1934 Mann, Thomas. Joseph and His Brothers.
1941 Fineman, Irving. Jacob.

JAIRUS' DAUGHTER

1951 Fox, Paul. The Daughter of Jairus.

JAMES

1944 Wilson, Dorothy C. The Brother.

JEREMIAH

1938 Werfel, Franz V. Hearken unto the Voice.
1953 Weinreb, Nathaniel N. The Babylonians.

JEZEBEL (See AHAB AND JEZEBEL)

JOHN

1911 Bird, Robert. John: The Companion of Jesus.

JOHN THE BAPTIST

1950 Dieterle, William (Wm. Sidney, pseud.). The Good Tidings.

JONAH

1925 Nathan, Robert. Jonah.
1939 Tandrup, Harald. The Reluctant Prophet.

JOSEPH

1895 Bird, Robert. Joseph the Dreamer.
1907 Kelly, William P. The Stonecutter of Memphis.
1930 Roberts, Carl E. B. Corn in Egypt.
1934 Mann, Thomas. Joseph and His Brothers.
1935 _____. Young Joseph.
1938 _____. Joseph in Egypt.
1944 _____. Joseph, the Provider.
1946 Eberle, Gertrude. The Charioteer.
1947 Parker, Norton S. Table in the Wilderness.

JOSEPH, HUSBAND OF MARY

1935 Graham, Hiram. Joseph, the Husband of Mary.
1935 Hart, Elizabeth. The Husband of Mary.
1954 Lovelace, Delos W. Journey to Bethlehem.

JOSHUA

1867 Ebers, Georg. Joshua.
1888 Osborne, Samuel D. The Spell of Ashtaroth.
1917 Brady, C. T. When the Sun Stood Still.

JUDAS

1890 Brooks, Elbridge. A Son of Issachar.
1907 Andreev, Leonid M. Judas Iscariot.
1909 Byatt, H. The Testament of Judas.
1927 Sheppard, Alfred T. The Autobiography of Judas Iscariot.
1939 Linklater, Eric. Judas.
1951 Blythe, LeGette. A Tear for Judas.

LAZARUS

1891 Phelps, Elizabeth Stuart and Ward, Herbert D. Come Forth.
1906 Andreev, Leonid M. Eleasar.
1909 Copus, John E. The Son of Siro.

LOT AND HIS WIFE

1891 Kitchin, W. C. The Story of Sodom.
1954 Ley-Piscator, Maria. Lot's Wife.

LUKE

1944 Perkins, Jacob Randolph. The Emperor's Physician.
1951 Slaughter, Frank G. The Road to Bithynia.

MAGI (THE WISE MEN)

1889 France, Anatole. Belthazar.
1895 Van Dyke, Henry. The Other Wise Man.
1934 Oxenham, John. Christ and the Third Wise Man.
1944 Hartley, J. M. The Way.

MARY (MOTHER OF JESUS)

1933 Borden, Mary. Mary of Nazareth.
1933 Des Valliers, Jean. Mary of Jerusalem.
1947 Frost, Elizabeth (Hollister). Mary and the Spinners.
1949 Asch, Sholem. Mary.
1954 Lovelace, Delos W. Journey to Bethlehem.

MARY MAGDALENE

1903 Anonymous. The Life of St. Mary Magdalen.
1906 Klarmann, Andrew. The Princess of Gan-Sar.
1909 Roberson, Mrs. H. G. Mary of Magdala.
1935 Browne, Lewis. All Things Are Possible.
1935 Olivier, Edith. Mary Magdalen.
1944 Murphy, Edward F. The Scarlet Lily.
1946 _____. Road from Olivet.
1950 Bell, Sallie Lee. Until the Day Break.
1950 MacClure, Victor. A Certain Woman.
1953 Slaughter, Frank G. The Galileans.

MOSES

1859 Ingraham. J. H. The Pillar of Fire.
1871 Whyte-Melville, G. J. Sarchedon.
1880 Hodder, Edwin. Ephraim and Helah.
1882 Gautier, Theophile. The Romance of a Mummy.
1886 Walloth, Wilhelm. The King's Treasure House.
1888 Henty, George A. The Cat of Bubastes.
1890 Haggard, Sir Henry R. The World's Desire.
1897 Yonge, Charlotte M. Pilgrimage of the Ben Beriah.
1904 Miller, Elizabeth. The Yoke.
1918 Haggard, Sir Henry R. Moon of Israel.
1924 Eckenstein, L. Tutankh-Aten.
1925 Pier, Garrett C. Hidden Valley.
1925 Rawlins, Eustace. The Hidden Treasures of Egypt.
1928 Fleg, Edmond. The Life of Moses.
1928 Jansen, Warner. The Light of Egypt.
1928 Untermeyer, Louis. Moses.
1929 Eyles, Margaret L. Shepherd of Israel.
1939 Hurston, Zora N. Moses, Man of the Mountain.
1939 Southon, Arthur E. This Evil Generation.
1942 Hardy, William G. All the Trumpets Sounded.

1945 Mann, Thomas. Tables of the Law.
1947 Bercovici, Konrad. The Exodus.
1949 Wilson, Dorothy C. Prince of Egypt.
1951 Asch, Sholem. Moses.
1951 Shippen, Katherine B. Moses.
1954 Southon, Arthur E. On Eagles' Wings.

NAAMAN (See ELISHA)

NATHANAEL

1942 Sutphen, Van Tassel. I, Nathanael, Knew Jesus.

NEHEMIAH (See EZRA)

NOAH

1934 Walker, K. M. and Boumphrey, G. M. The Log of the Ark.
1937 Mottram, Ralph Hale. Noah.

ONESIMUS

1882 Abbott, Edwin A. Onesimus: Christ's Freedman.
1924 Laut, Agnes Christina. Quenchless Light.

PAUL

1877 Davies, Gerald Stanley. St. Paul in Greece.
1897 Kingsley, Florence (Morse). Paul.
1898 Wood, Henry. Victor Serenus.
1900 Bird, Robert. Paul of Tarsus.
1904 Gardenhire, Samuel M. Lux Crucis.
1904 Mason, Caroline. The White Shield.
1905 Church, A. J. The Crown of Pine.

1906 Miller, Elizabeth. Saul of Tarsus.
1927 Byrne, Donn. Brother Saul.
1930 Anonymous. Paul: The Christian.
1943 Asch, Sholem. The Apostle.
1952 Berstl, Julius. The Tentmaker.

PENITENT THIEF

1899 Stoddard, William O. Ulric the Jarl.
1908 Robinson, Nellie G. Philo's Daughter.
1931 Komroff, Manuel. Two Thieves.

PETER

1929 Scott, Gabriel. The Golden Gospel.
1948 Douglas, Lloyd Cassel. The Big Fisherman.

PILATE AND HIS WIFE

1892 France, Anatole. The Procurator of Judaea.
1906 Hobbs, Roe R. The Court of Pilate.
1906 Schuyler, William. Under Pontius Pilate.
1913 Kingsley, Florence (Morse). Veronica.
1928 Crozier, William P. Letters of Pontius Pilate.
1929 Granger, Mary. Wife to Pilate.

RUTH

1949 Fineman, Irving. Ruth.
1950 Murphy, Edward F. The Song of the Cave.
1954 Slaughter, Frank G. The Song of Ruth.

SALOME (See also HEROD, HERODIAS, AND SALOME)

1921 Jenkins, Burris A. Princess Salome.
1952 Denker, Henry. Salome: Princess of Galilee.

SAMSON

1891 Odell, Samuel. Samson.
1902 Hales, H. H. Jair the Apostate.
1928 Washburn, Robert C. Samson.
1930 Zhabotinsky, Vladimir E. Samson the Nazarite.
1931 Salten, Felix. Samson and Delilah.

SIMON OF CYRENE

1923 Shastid, T. H. Simon of Cyrene.
1940 Stuart, Frank S. Caravan for China.

SOLOMON

1923 Kuprin, Aleksandr I. Sulamith.
1924 Mardrus, Joseph C. V. The Queen of Sheba.
1924 Seymour, St. John Drelincourt. Tales of King Solomon.
1930 Fleg, Edmond. The Life of Solomon.
1935 Erskine, John. Solomon, My Son.
1936 Wheeler, P. Golden Legend of Ethiopia.
1951 Fisher, Vardis. The Valley of Vision.

STEPHEN

1896 Kingsley, Florence (Morse). Stephen.

THOMAS

1931 Nazhivin, I. F. According to Thomas.
1947 Malvern, Gladys. According to Thomas.

TITUS

1895 Kingsley, Florence (Morse). Titus, a Comrade of the Cross.

WOMAN OF SAMARIA

1949 Ingles, James Wesley. A Woman of Samaria.

ZEDEKIAH

1880's or 1890's Bramston, Mary. The King's Daughters.
1931 Wallis, Louis. By the Waters of Babylon.

MACCABAEAN ERA

1824 Strauss, Gerhard Friedrich. Helon's Pilgrimage to Jerusalem.
1889 Church, A. J. and Seeley, R. The Hammer.
1898 Yonge, Charlotte M. The Patriots of Palestine.
1901 Ludlow, James M. Deborah.
1913 Johnson, Gillard. Raphael of the Olive.
1934 Mazer, Sonia. Yossele's Holiday and the Brave Maccabees.
1948 Fast, Howard M. My Glorious Brothers.

APOCRYPHAL

1905 Buchanan, Thompson. Judith Triumphant.
1952 Goris, Johannes A. The Book of Joachim of Babylon.

JUVENILE: A PARTIAL LIST

Baker, Amy J. Tyrian Purple (1919).
Bird, Robert. Jesus, the Carpenter of Nazareth (1891).
_____. Joseph the Dreamer (1895).
_____. Paul of Tarsus (1900).
_____. John, the Companion of Jesus (1911).
Bonser, Edna M. The Little Boy of Nazareth (1930).
Bramston, Mary. The King's Daughters (1880's or 1890's).
Charles, Elizabeth (Rundle). Diary of Brother Bartholomew (1870).

Church, A. J. *The Hammer* (1889).
_____. *The Burning of Rome* (1892).
_____. *The Crown of Pine* (1905).
Daugherty, Sonia. *Wings of Glory* (1940).
Ellis, J. Breckenridge. *Adnah* (1902).
Ingraham, J. H. *The Prince of the House of David* (1855).
_____. *The Pillar of Fire* (1859).
_____. *The Throne of David* (1860).
Johnston, Annie (Fellows). *Joel, a Boy of Galilee* (1895).
Kingsley, Florence (Morse). *Titus, a Comrade of the Cross* (1895).
_____. *Stephen, a Soldier of the Cross* (1896).
_____. *Paul, a Herald of the Cross* (1897).
_____. *The Cross Triumphant* (1900).
_____. *Love Triumphant* (1905).
_____. *The Star of Love* (1909).
_____. *Veronica* (1913).
Lau, Josephine Sanger. *Beggar Boy of Galilee* (1946).
Leslie, Emma. *Glaucia* (1891).
Lillie, Amy M. *Nathan* (1945).
_____. *Stephen* (1947).
Mazer, Sonia. *Yossele's Holiday and the Brave Maccabees* (1934).
Mottram, Ralph Hale. *Noah* (1937).
Read, Opie P. *The Son of a Swordmaker* (1905).
Shippen, Katherine B. *Moses* (1951).
Smyth, Samuel P. N. *The Story of the Child that Jesus Took* (1907).
Stoddard, William O. *The Swordmaker's Son* (1896).
_____. *Ulric the Jarl* (1899).
Van Dyke, Henry. *The Lost Boy* (1914).
Walker, K. M. and Boumphrey, G. M. *The Log of the Ark* (1934).
Wallace, Lew. *The Boyhood of Christ* (1889).
Webb, Mrs. J. B. *Pomponia* (1867).
Yonge, Charlotte M. *Pilgrimage of the Ben Beriah* (1897).
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